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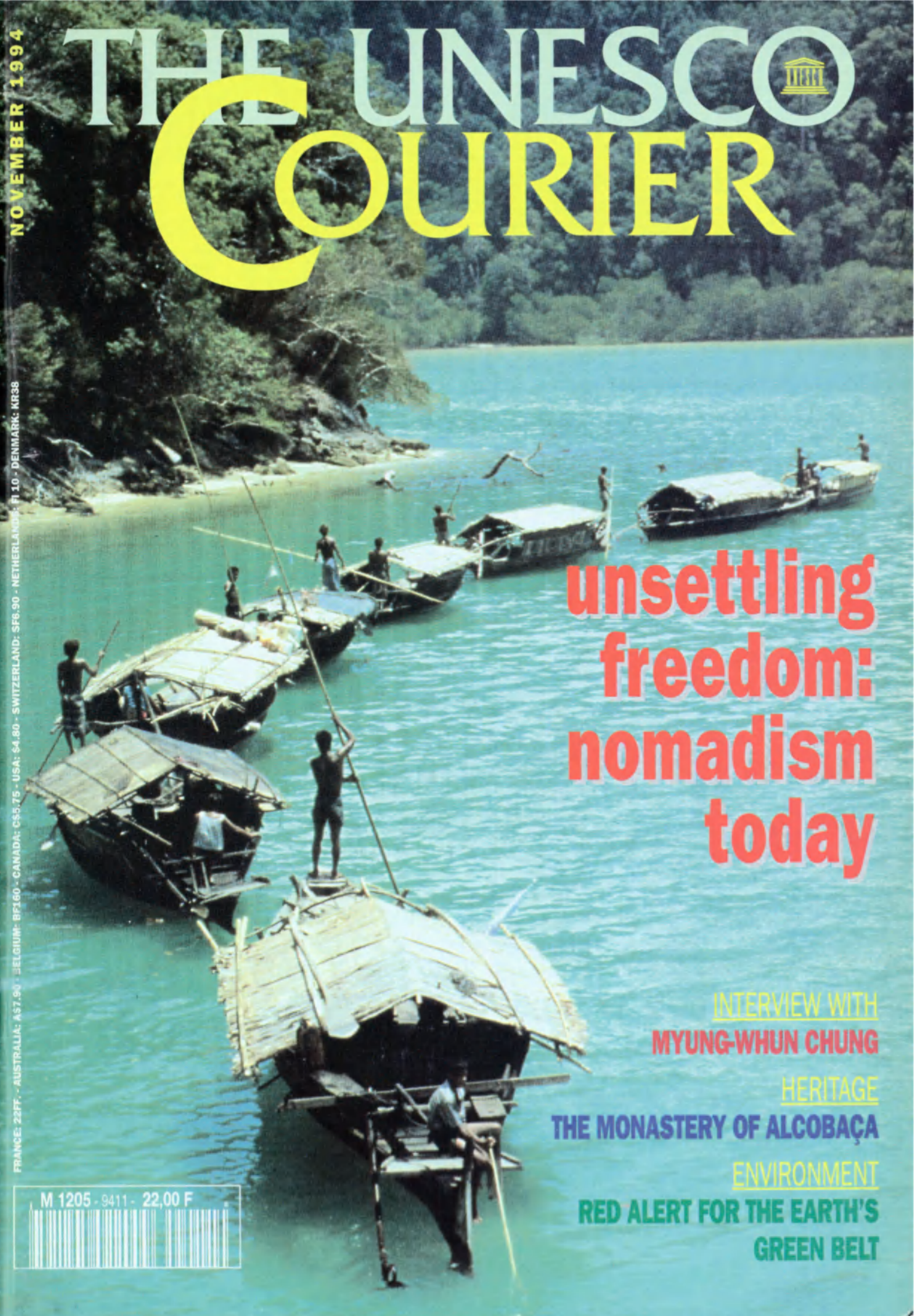

unsettling freedom: nomadism today

INTERVIEW WITH
MYUNG-WHUN CHUNG

HERITAGE
THE MONASTERY OF ALCOBAÇA

ENVIRONMENT
RED ALERT FOR THE EARTH'S GREEN BELT

M 1205 - 9411 - 22,00 F

E N C O U N T E R S

We invite readers to send us photographs to be considered for publication in this feature. Your photo should show a painting, a sculpture, piece of architecture or any other subject which seems to be an example of cross-fertilization between cultures. Alternatively, you could send us pictures of two works from different cultural backgrounds in which you see some striking connection or resemblance. Please add a short caption to all photographs.

Discs from the "Floresta" series

(1991-1992)
Mixed media on wood, diameter: 50 cm,
by Virginia Ryan Izzo

These painted discs form part of a series entitled "Floresta". In 1993 there were 36 of them. The series was executed in Belgrade and is intended as an offering for the "dispossessed and threatened". It is also the "visual diary" of a widely-travelled Australian-Italian artist, who writes: "I hope the discs reflect my fascination for, and debt to, the Australia of the Aborigines, Greco-Roman Alexandria and Pharaonic Upper Egypt, South America and the Mediterranean, for although I grew up in Australia, I have spent significant time-spans living in vastly different cultures and civilizations."

Contents
NOVEMBER 1994

Cover: a group of Moken, a nomadic sea-faring people who live in the Mergui archipelago, Myanmar (formerly Burma).
Back cover: Tuareg of the Aïr mountains of the southern Sahara (Niger).

5 Interview with **Myung-Whun Chung**

36 HERITAGE
The monastery of Alcobaça
par José Augusto Seabra

41 GREENWATCH
Red alert for the earth's green belt
by France Bequette

34 UNESCO IN ACTION

39 GLOBAL VIEW
Literacy: How to reach the excluded

44 ANNIVERSARY
Rabelais: the ribald scholar
by Alain Frontier

46 ARCHIVES
Marie Curie
The spirit of adventure

48 LISTENING
Seeking the inner voice
Catherine Françaix talks to Isabelle Leymarie

49 LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

UNSETTLING FREEDOM: NOMADISM TODAY 8

8 **Nomads and the modern state**
An unsettling freedom
by André Bourgeot

12 **Tuareg: silent lives**
photos by Frances Dal Chele

14 **Twixt land and sea**
The myth of the Moken
by Jacques Ivanoff

17 **The return of the Bedouin**
by Riccardo Bocco and Ronald Jaubert

21 **On the road**
The European odyssey of the Gypsies
by Patrick Williams

25 **Forest rovers of the Amazon**
by Howard Reid

29 **The vanishing African herdsman**
by John Galaty

33 Further reading on nomads

Consultant: André Bourgeot

35
***Commentary* by Federico Mayor**

THE UNESCO COURIER

47th year
Published monthly in 30 languages and in Braille

"The Governments of the States parties to this Constitution on behalf of their peoples declare,
"that since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed ...
"that a peace based exclusively upon the political and economic arrangements of governments would not be a peace which could secure the unanimous, lasting and sincere support of the peoples of the world, and that the peace must therefore be founded, if it is not to fail, upon the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind.
"For these reasons, the States parties ... are agreed and determined to develop and to increase the means of communication between their peoples and to employ these means for the purposes of mutual understanding and a truer and more perfect knowledge of each other's lives...."
EXTRACT FROM THE PREAMBLE TO THE CONSTITUTION OF UNESCO, LONDON, 16 NOVEMBER 1945

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Month by month

Nomads are misfits in the modern world. The state likes to see them settled in one place, to "integrate" them and keep tabs on them. The sedentary population is suspicious of them because it does not understand their way of life. They have no place in a narrowminded conception of modern civilization which only accepts what can be pinned down, predicted and programmed.

They live on the outer edge of the economic system, usually on unproductive land, practising a frugal and uncertain way of life. They are shy of frontiers and avoid controls and supervision. Everything about them is a challenge to modern society. They take what it rejects and esteem values and codes it has abandoned. They melt away into vast landscapes—deserts, forests, lakes, steppes—which the sedentary may regard as hostile but which for them mean life, beauty, poetry and freedom.

This issue of the *Courier* records some of the things that nomads have to tell us. In a more general way it may also stimulate reflection about difference and the difficulty of being different today, about the spread of intolerance, about the fears and anxieties that lead people to reject what is at variance with themselves.

In any case, what sort of world would it be if everyone conformed to the same pattern? In such a world we should not only die of boredom, but of inability to adapt, to change, to renew ourselves to meet life's unending challenges. For societies, as for living organisms, diversity is a necessary condition of survival. As the nomads, with their thousands of years of history, remind us.

BAHGAT ELNADI AND ADEL RIFAAT

MYUNG-WHUN CHUNG

talks to Claude Glayman

An immense ovation broke out at the Bastille Opera House in Paris on 19 September 1994 when the curtain went down at the end of the first performance there of Verdi's *Simon Boccanegra*, conducted by Myung-Whun Chung. The audience was giving a memorable salute to the last work conducted by the young Korean conductor (except for a piece by Olivier Messiaen, *Concert à quatre*, dedicated to Mr. Chung and conducted by him on 26 September) as musical director of the Bastille Opera.

Myung-Whun Chung succeeded Daniel Barenboim as musical director in 1989 and conducted the first opera to be performed there, Berlioz's *Les Troyens*. In 1994, however, the situation at the Bastille Opera changed when the decision was taken to appoint a director bearing overall responsibility. Hugues Gall, manager of the Grand Theatre in Geneva (Switzerland), has been appointed to this post to take effect from August 1995.

To outside observers, a conflict seemed inevitable, and in March 1994 discussions began between the Opera management and Chung to take led to the enforced departure of the Korean conductor.

Myung-Whun Chung was born in Korea in 1951. He is reserved and seems to have little time to spare for anything but music and the constant effort to achieve perfection in it. Art is not Myung-Whun Chung's only interest, however:

"I was born a few months after the outbreak of the Korean war. My parents—my mother was born in North Korea—had had a pretty good idea of what was going to happen. Even today, forty years after the tragedy, I am still strongly in favour of the reunification of my country, although I feel that it will be a longer and more difficult process than the reunification of Germany.

"I ask myself, without being able to answer, why there should be this division and this antagonism between members of the same people, who share the same civilization, history and language. Politics is behind it all—and the effects of political mistakes last for a very long time."

Chung was attracted to music at a very early age, as a result of personal inclination and family influence—he had strong backing from his parents, and two older sisters became famous instrumentalists. He trained simultaneously as a pianist and a conductor. After a first visit to the United States in 1968, he went to Moscow to take part in the prestigious Tchaikovsky competition for pianists.

"It's not hard to imagine what this competition meant to the authorities at that time, and how important it was for them that a Russian should win the First Prize. This way-out patriotism, at variance with the universal, cosmopolitan nature of music, came as a shock."

■ *How do you explain your passion for European music?*

—I was immersed in classical music even before I was born. For me it was a natural language before it became a profession (in addition to the piano I have also played

DISCOGRAPHY

Camille Saint-Saens: *Samson et Dalila*, Placido Domingo, Waltraud Meier, Alain Fondar, Samuel Ramey and others, Choir and Orchestra of the Bastille Opera, conducted by Myung-Whun Chung.
1 set of 2 CDs EMI.

Camille Saint-Saens: *Third Symphony with Organ*, and Olivier Messiaen: *Ascension*, the Bastille Opera Orchestra conducted by Myung-Whun Chung.
1 CD Deutsche Grammophon.

Olivier Messiaen: *Turangalîla-Symphonie*, Yvonne Loriod (piano), Jeanne Loriod (Ondes Martenot), the Bastille Opera Orchestra conducted by Myung-Whun Chung. 1 CD Deutsche Grammophon.

Olivier Messiaen: *Eclairs sur l'au-delà*, the Bastille Opera Orchestra conducted by Myung-Whun Chung,
1 CD Deutsche Grammophon.

Georges Bizet: *Suite de Carmen, Suites nos 1 and 2 of the Arlésienne, Petite suite d'orchestre (Jeux d'enfants)*, the Bastille Opera Orchestra conducted by Myung-Whun Chung, 1 CD Deutsche Grammophon.

Dimitri Shostakovitch: *Lady Macbeth of Mtzensk*, Maria Ewing and others, the Bastille Opera Orchestra conducted by Myung-Whun Chung, 1 set of 2 CDs Deutsche Grammophon (forthcoming).

Anton Dvorak: *Trios n° 1 op. 21 and n° 3 op 65*, The Chung Trio, Kyung Wha Chung (violin), Myung Wha Chung ('cello), Myung-Whun Chung (piano), 1 CD Decca.

Ludwig van Beethoven: *Trios nos 4 and 7*, The Chung Trio, Kyung Wha Chung (violin), Myung Wha Chung ('cello), Myung-Whun Chung (piano), 1CD EMI.

Rimsky-Korsakov: *Schéhérazade* and Stravinsky: *The Firebird*, the Bastille Opera Orchestra conducted by Myung-Whun Chung, 1CD Deutsche Grammophon.

Serge Prokofiev: *Romeo and Juliet* (extracts), Amsterdam Concertgebouw conducted by Myung-Whun Chung, 1CD Deutsche Grammophon.

In preparation for Deutsche Grammophon: Verdi's *Otello*, Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique* and Dutilleux's *Métaboles*, Berlioz's *Overtures* and *Airs d'Opéras français* with the soprano K. Battle.

The Chung trio: Myung-Whun Chung (piano) with his two sisters, violinist Kyung-Wha (left) and cellist Myung-Wha (right).

the violin and the kettledrums). Classical music is truly universal. It is understood and shared by an infinitely greater number of people than any form of traditional music. For me traditional music is, by and large, like the stalest kind of Western folklore. It is a question of evolution. If you compare the two styles of music over a sufficiently long period, five centuries, say, you can reasonably put forward the case that traditional music has hardly changed.

■ *So what do you think of the branch of classical music that is usually described as "contemporary"?*

—Technically difficult music has existed since the baroque and Johann Sebastian Bach. Modern experimental music is an extremely advanced art-form which one ought to keep up with and if possible perform. But to make a contribution to it requires an enormous amount of time. It is in the forefront of a rapidly changing field. It is a new dimension whose contours are not always clear to the composers themselves. Electronic music is only one aspect of it. But the modular hall at the Bastille Opera, for example, should be useful for further exploration of this type of music, which could pave the way to the opera of the future.

■ *Tell us something about your meeting with Olivier Messiaen.*

—I met him for the first time at Sarrebrück where I was conducting a programme of his music. He was a man of very great talent and I was delighted that he had come. Later I recorded some of his music and we agreed to stage his *Saint-François d'Assise* at the Bastille, directed by Peter Sellars. That was in 1992, and alas, Messiaen died later in the year.

■ *What were your working methods at the Bastille Opera?*

—When I was approached about the post, I hesitated at first, knowing full well that I would be involved in a great deal of administrative work that would prevent me from devoting all my time to music. Everyone advised me against it, but I finally accepted because I felt that there was something to be constructed there.

At the Opera, the musicians have always felt that they were given short shrift and of course that they were up against the bureaucracy. My position was simple. The purpose of the Opera as a whole and of everybody who is involved in it, should be to make it easier for the musicians to do their job and to

A conductor should strike the right balance between the professional approach and an ethical way of life. It is important that professionalism should not prevail over human considerations. This is vital in an age when the notion of professionalism has become sacrosanct.

Myung-Whun Chung (left) after conducting the first performance of *Concert à Quatre*, a posthumous work by the French composer Olivier Messiaen, at the Bastille Opera in Paris on 26 September 1994. The work was performed by the Orchestra and Choir of the Paris Opera with pianist Yvonne Loriod (middle), the composer's widow, and cellist Mstislav Rostropovich (right).

help them fulfil themselves. The Bastille Opera orchestra is, in my opinion, the best in France, and I would like to see it make more of an impact internationally.

■ *Have you met many great conductors during your career?*

—Yes, I had the honour to do two or three days' work with Herbert von Karajan, for example. But my most important encounter was with Carlo Maria Giulini, whose assistant I became in Los Angeles in 1978 after I had finished my studies. Paradoxically, he taught me above all not to place art above human qualities. A conductor should strike the right balance between the professional approach and an ethical way of life. It is important that professionalism should not prevail over human considerations. This is vital in an age when the notion of professionalism has become sacrosanct.

Giulini also strengthened my Christian faith. My parents were Christian, but I was not when I was very young. I came to Christianity with difficulty, after much questioning. Giulini was an example for me. He is a man who has kept his purity in a world of indifference.

I have also had the honour of being received in private audience by His Holiness Pope John Paul II, whose message to me was very clear: "You must do something for humanity. You must take a stand against drugs, against pollution, against conflict and in favour of peace and concord between people. That is your mission."

He also said: "Even if there are all kinds of talent, there is no fundamental difference between people. Talent, of whatever kind, is no exception to this principle." Politics cannot solve all the problems that beset the world, and I feel that I—and many others—should do what we can in a disinterested fashion. I have, incidentally, been appointed a United Nations goodwill ambassador.

I came to the same conclusion at the Bastille Opera. Nothing is possible without hard work and patience. Ready-made solutions do not exist. But everything always has to be done on the spur of the moment. We do not give ourselves enough time to think carefully about what we do, and personally I feel very unhappy about all this haste. We achieve far more if we are more tolerant and in less of a hurry.

Constantly changing the people at the top of institutions—musical and otherwise—will not lead to tangible and lasting results. We must build with greater modesty and perseverance. Music and life are not two separate compartments. ■

CLAUDE GLAYMAN
is a French journalist and music critic.

Nomads and the modern state

by André Bourgeot

Nomadism is one of the most balanced relationships mankind has made with nature. But nomads are misfits in the modern state and today their living space and their identity are under growing threat.

Nomadic societies have played an important part in history and have made an undeniable contribution to the development of different techniques and ways of using land. Although their economic, political and religious role is beyond doubt, for generation after generation nomads have been looked down upon, and regarded predominantly as rapacious vagabonds and as parasites upon the body of society.

In our own times, most of these societies are suffering from the decline of their traditional structures and deepening poverty. In these circumstances, they become dependent on international aid as and when they adopt a sedentary way of life in urban environments.

Nomads are, however, to a considerable extent self-sufficient in food production and still have a contribution to make to countries' economic balance. Pastoral nomadism, in particular, remains the surest safeguard against environmental degradation and desertification.

Diversified societies

Nomad societies in fact practise a very wide range of productive activities in a great many different environments. The best known of these activities, which may thus be taken as the main example, are those of nomad herders. Including part-time pastoralists who also engage in agriculture and stock-rearing, they number some thirty million worldwide. Their chief occupation is tending flocks and herds of domesticated herbivores, and the territories over which they range are ones where naturally-occurring resources enable an annual cycle of production to be maintained.

In nomadic as distinct from sedentary communities, man's relationship with nature is conducted via his livestock, which are both his means of production and his consumer goods. The nomadic community is concerned to preserve and regenerate the environment, and therefore manages its territory in a rational manner.

Various other forms of nomadism are represented by "travellers" (European Gypsies), distinguishable by their attitude towards the dead and towards language; the Moken fisher-gatherers of Myanmar and the south-west coast of Thailand, recognizable by the indentations in the poop and prow of their boats and by the place of the yam in their culture; the aborigene hunter-gatherers of the Kimberleys (Australia), whose identity is expressed in the symbiosis between the sanctuary, the individual and the supernatural being; or the Pygmy hunter-gatherers, scattered over eight countries, who are ignorant of agri-

culture and metalworking and whose identity is symbolized by the (mainly male) activity of hunting with nets and the (mainly female) activity of gathering.

Diverse as they are, all these communities have certain common features, a combination of mobility and flexibility that has enabled them to face up both to domination by the societies with which they are in permanent contact and to the effects of colonial expansion, which represented a crucial point in their history.

The fact is that colonial rule interfered with, or in some cases obliterated, the internal dynamics of these communities, as a result of the introduction or expansion of new economic activities, changes in the pattern of land ownership, the disruption of the established power structure, the re-drawing of frontiers and boundaries, and so on. The crisis in nomad society that began then has gathered speed in the context of the post-colonial states.

A comparison of the history of herding societies with that of other nomadic societies shows that the former devised strategies of conquest, with the aid of the camel in the case of the Bedouin (Moors and Tuaregs) and with that of the horse in the case of the Fulani and the Mongols; conversely, the nomadic societies of itinerant merchants or of hunters and gatherers

The Tsaatan (in Mongolian, "those who have reindeer") live in northern Mongolia, where they continue a tradition of reindeer breeding that goes back as far as the Bronze Age. Above, in spring they move down the wooded mountain slopes to the place where the reindeer give birth. The Tsaatan live in yurts, tents similar to the tepees of North American Indians. Below right, striking camp.

Nomadic goat-breeders in the Rif mountains, northern Morocco.

were in most instances reduced to a position of subordination to societies of agriculturalists.

The fate of most of these communities was, however, to be subjected to economic and political marginalization (e.g. the herders of the Sahel) or to be parked in reservations or exterminated (Amerindians, South African Bushmen, Gypsies in Nazi-dominated Europe), or else to undergo integration or indeed assimilation, a policy inspired by an ideology aiming to achieve cultural and economic uniformity.

Integration is imposed on nomads by herding them together around centres of economic activity (as happened to the Moken during World War II), by radically altering their territorial organization with the aim of setting up community stations and villages (the case of the Australian Aborigenes), and by repressive policies of expulsion, confiscation of flocks and herds, and the destruction of crops grown on state land.

The main way in which state policy affects nomadic herders' way of life is via the introduction of technical innovations. Thus, the effect on the environment of the sinking of public wells—overgrazing leading to erosion through the disappearance of vegetation—is to upset the balance of the ecosystem and to disrupt the management of grazing land and the control exercised over it by the community, in the absence of which such well-drilling operations turn the adjacent area into a desert.

A "Copper Eskimo" photographed in 1916. Copper Eskimos lived in the Northwest Territories of Canada and made weapons from the native copper they found on the shores. Today the Eskimos (or Inuit) only follow their ancestors' nomadic hunting and fishing way of life in summer.

In the minority—numerically or politically?

As regards animal husbandry, the main innovations are in the field of veterinary medicine, measures to combat livestock epidemics in particular. These measures encourage livestock growth but in so doing upset the balance between the carrying capacity of the grazing land, which itself varies in accordance with climatic factors, and the increasing size of flocks and herds.

Lastly, the development of food or cash crops such as rice and cotton takes up more and more land to the detriment of nomad communities.

Except in those countries like Mauritania, Djibouti or Somalia whose leaders themselves

Whoever would think greatly must stray greatly.

Martin Heidegger
German philosopher (1889-1976)

come from a nomad background, nomads find themselves in one or other of the following minority situations:

a) groups that move about on the frontiers of one country but are of the same nationality, religion and language as the populations of a neighbouring country; such groups form a restricted minority within a given national territory, e.g. the Algerian Tuareg of Tamesna, in Niger;

b) groups isolated within a given country and surrounded by population groups of the demographic majority, e.g. certain Arabic-speaking groups in Niger and Mali;

c) groups scattered over the whole of a country's territory—the commonest case;

d) groups belonging to one and the same cultural community spread across several nation-states, e.g. Fulani, Toubou, Moorish, Arab and Tuareg nomad herders.

When applied to these groups, the term "minority" does not necessarily imply that they are fewer in number; it refers to a politically dependent situation. Such minorities fall into two categories, which may be labelled respectively:

a) the minority "in itself", consisting of groups of nomads who are distinguished from the rest of the population by ethnic, linguistic and religious characteristics and by their cultural links; the overall population of these groups is small and they do not occupy a dominant political position;

b) the minority "for itself", i.e. one that has woken up to its situation and is resolved to preserve its way of life and patterns of behaviour; this state of awareness may lead to the group voicing demands relating to its identity that are in effect political demands.

Frontiers and limits

The societies in which nomadic herders live are mostly homogeneous cultural communities with a territory scattered over several nation-states. The intensive stock-rearing that they practise cannot be contained within artificial, often arbitrarily drawn frontiers; a cross-border territory is a necessity for the purposes of a yearly production cycle the most striking feature of which is transhumance, the seasonal migration of livestock to different feeding grounds.

The strict delimitation of national frontiers has in many cases had deleterious effects on the structure of these societies. National sovereignty, surveillance, and the principle of the inviolability of frontiers, all matters of vital concern to the state, represent real difficulties for nomadic herders and for some fishing communities; they are, however, less of a problem for Pygmy hunter-gatherers since, owing to the nature of their activities, the diversity of the natural resources and the type of environment, Pygmies do not need large swathes of territory.

A convention for nomads

The major international human rights conventions fail to take account of the particular case of transnational minorities. Since these minorities often have no wish to belong to any one nation, they find themselves relegated, in terms of international law, to a political and legal limbo.

The time has perhaps come to look into the possibility of special conventions relating to nomadism that would encourage the easing of border-control measures, ensure a transnational territorial basis for each community, and protect its cultural homogeneity. These conventions should lead on to the drafting of a charter on transhumance, for which the requisites would be, firstly, the simultaneous establishment in the countries concerned of a body of land law governing access to resources and, secondly, the recognition of a system of landed property that at last responds to the interests of nomadic herders. ■

The last Aka pygmy nomads live deep in the equatorial forest of central Africa, on the border of the Central African Republic and the Congo. Hunters and gatherers, they live in huts made of leaves and branches (above).

ANDRÉ BOURGEOT,
a French anthropologist, is a specialist in pastoral societies, especially that of the Tuaregs, with whom he lived for several years. A researcher at his country's National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS), he is co-leader with Henri Guillaume of a research team on "States and Nomad Societies" (CNRS and ORSTOM, the French Institute of Scientific Research for Development in Co-operation).

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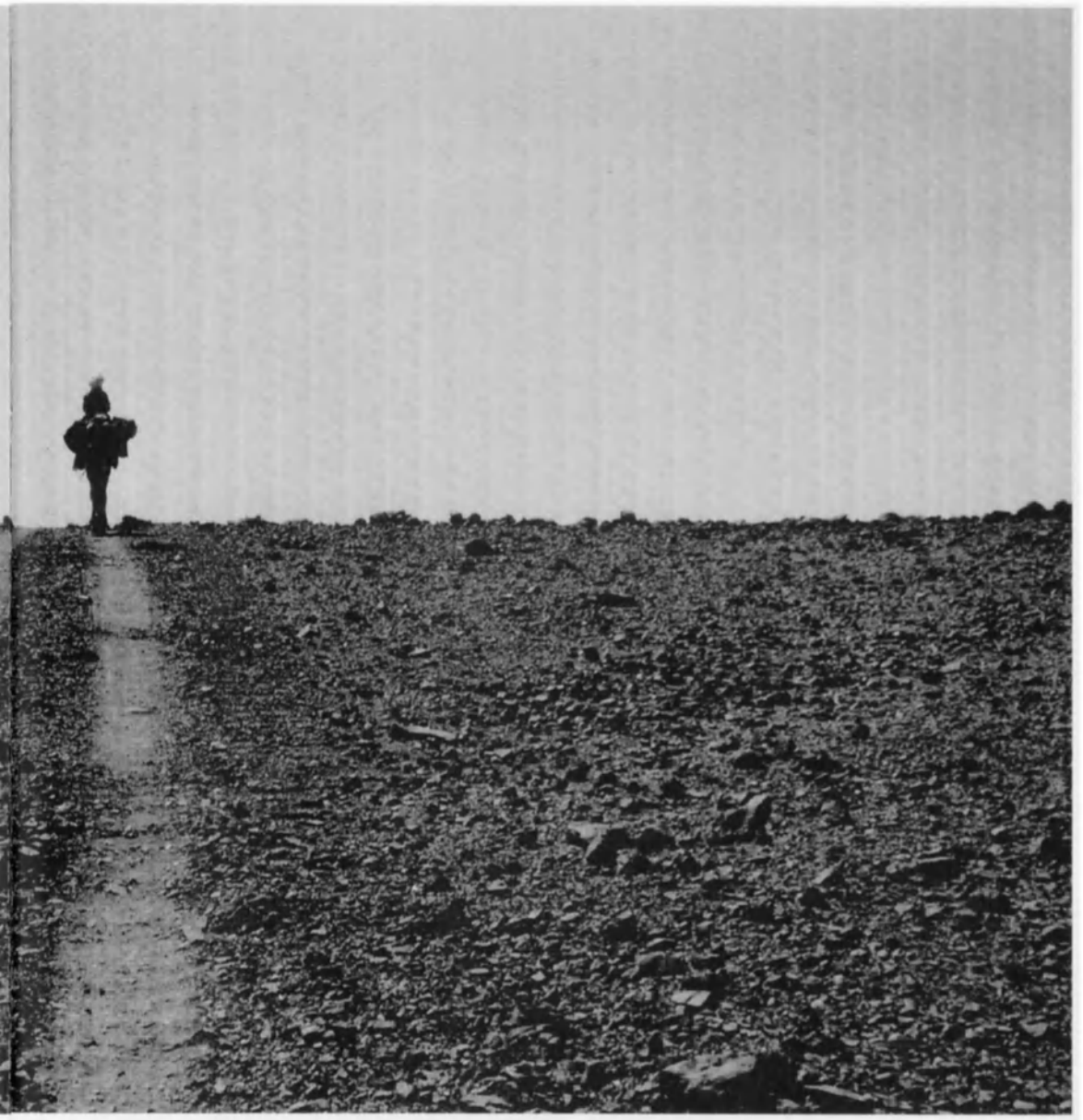


silent lives

"What has happened to the Tuareg, the legendary lords of the desert? How have they adapted to sedentary life? I wanted to find out with my own eyes—in other words with my camera—about the life they are living today. During two visits, in 1991 and 1993, I was given a warm welcome by sedentary Tuareg families in the Hoggar (Algerian Sahara). I shared their daily lives. I saw the meagre sustenance they get from their vegetable gardens and their goats, and from the money earned by the menfolk as camel-drivers or guides for tourists (when there are any). My photos are glimpses of the lives of people who cling proudly to their traditional way of life."

Frances Dal Chele
Photographer and ethnologist

Although they know how to grow crops, the Moken prefer to live on the sea through fidelity to their foundation myth, the story of Gaman and Sibian.

THE MYTH OF THE MOKEN

Twixt land and sea

by Jacques Ivanoff

The Moken are a nomadic seafaring folk who, living to all appearances on the fringes of human society, ply the waters of the Mergui archipelago, off the Tenasserim coast in the Bay of Bengal. No documentary evidence subsists from the period before British colonial expansion into this region to throw light on the mysterious past of these people who live afloat on extraordinary craft, use the resources of their environment in a curious way, and avoid all contact with the outside world.

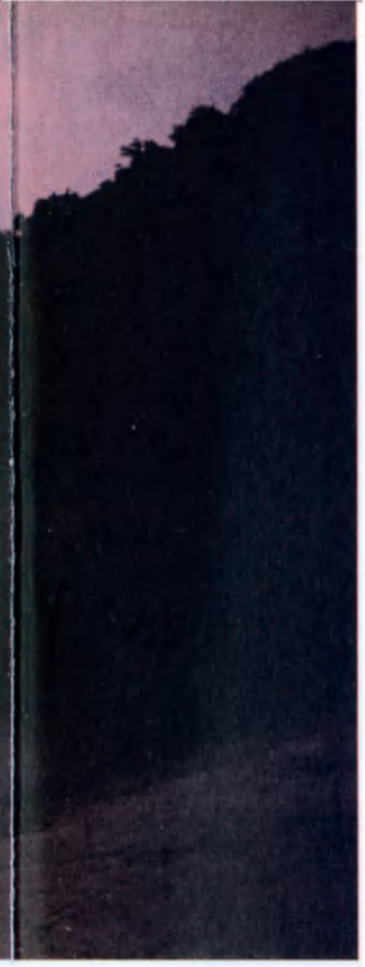
Employing so-called "archaic" technology—the harpoon and the adze being their main implements—and clad only in skimpy loin-cloths, the Moken practise a purely symbolic type of agriculture and refuse technical innovation in any shape or form, including the use of more efficient gear such as fish traps and nets that could increase their catches; they have made a deliberate choice to go on using only pointed or pronged harpoons.

A mistaken explanation was long put upon this choice by observers who saw the Moken only during the dry season and sent back a garbled account of their constant comings and goings, their apparent lack of any system of beliefs, and what seemed on the surface to be the looseness of the nomadic structure, as evidenced by the scattered and shifting dispositions of the fishing fleets.

In fact, when the rains come the Moken go ashore on the inhabited islands of the archipelago, where they grow rice, sorghum and millet. They do not, however, eat the crops they harvest. They use a few handfuls of rice for ritual purposes, in particular at the festival of the "Post of the Spirits", which occurs during the fifth lunar month and represents a recapitulation of the whole pre-Islamic and proto-Malay period of Malay history. Since, moreover, the only agricultural produce they do consume is obtained by way of trade, they are thus demonstrating that, while they are familiar with agricultural practices, they at the same time reject them.

During the rainy season, Moken society again becomes strongly bonded, and the various pieces of the nomadic jigsaw puzzle, with its different levels of social integration—by boat, fleet and subgroup—come together. This seasonal transition to a sedentary way of life awakens powerful unifying forces of which an upsurge of religious activity is the most visible expression.

This alternation between the rainy season and the dry season, between coming together



Some 150 Moken boats are still sailing today (above).

and dispersing, between a nomadic and a sedentary mode of life, between fishing and farming and between food-gathering and a self-imposed food shortage—the price the community pays for infringing its own rule of keeping on the move—is not by any means determined by the forces of nature alone: a logical explanation is to be found in the mythical account of the Moken's origins.

Gaman and Sibian

The key to the symbolic link between man, sea and boat is provided by the epic of Gaman, which sets forth the cultural motivations that have enabled the Moken to keep their identity intact throughout the changing fortunes of their history, withstanding, one after another, Islam, the agricultural way of life, missionaries, colonization, and the pressures exerted by expansionist nation-states that wanted to bring them under their control and acculturate them.

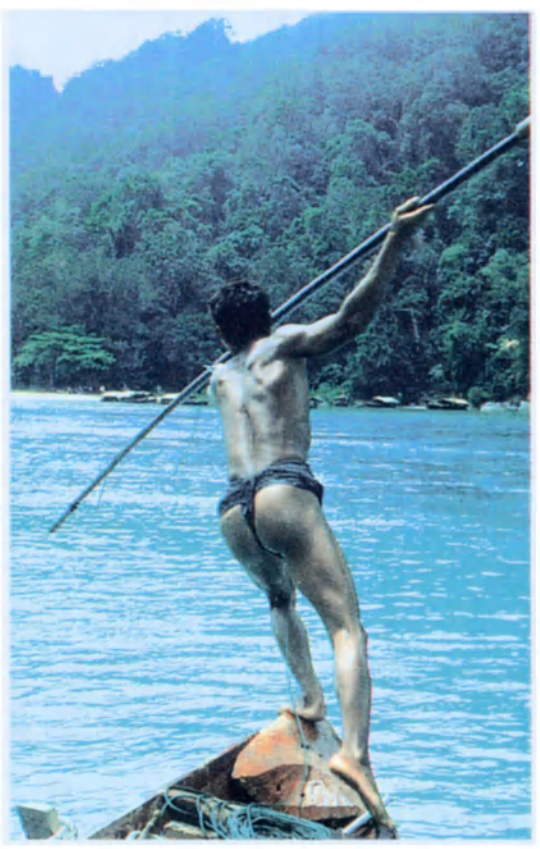
Gaman, a Muslim Malay, was the consort of Queen Sibian but was enamoured of his young sister-in-law Kèn and became her lover. By this act Kèn transgressed society's taboo against "mounting", i.e. taking the place of, one's elder. Outraged, Queen Sibian decreed that thereafter it would be forbidden to dwell on land, a ban symbolized by her ordering Kèn to be cast into the sea (*lemo Kèn*—the "immersion of Kèn") and that ever thereafter boats must be dugouts hewn from a single balk of timber, with indentations fore and aft ("a mouth that eats and a rear that defecates"), symbolizing the unending cycle of ingestion, digestion and evacuation.

Thus it came about that the Moken were condemned to a life at sea, cut off from their terrestrial roots and from the royal bounty. The golden age was over. Sibian's sentence was to weigh heavily upon the subsequent fate of the Moken and to provide the members of the new, nomadic community with a common criterion of identity: a Moken is anyone who accepts that name and builds his boats in accordance with Sibian's precepts.

This drama of forbidden love brings us to the heart of the factors that determine the Moken's sense of identity. By her immersion in the sea, Kèn came to symbolize a community casting off its terrestrial moorings, as embodied by Sibian. This is why the Moken cannot return to terra firma, which nonetheless remains symbolically present in the community in the form of yams and other traditional foods.

QUEEN SIBIAN'S DECREE

"Gaman, a Muslim Malay, was the consort of Queen Sibian but was enamoured of his young sister-in-law, Kèn, and became her lover. By this act, Kèn transgressed society's taboo against 'mounting', i.e. taking the place of, one's elder. Outraged, Queen Sibian decreed that thereafter it would be forbidden to dwell on land . . . ."



Poised for the kill: a Moken fisherman hunts turtle. Living between land and sea like the Moken, turtles are prized as a delicacy.

What's in a name?

The mythical account of the origins of the Moken yields, upon analysis, an explanation of certain features specific to them, such as their self-imposed poverty and the fact that they do not amass property, their rejection of technical innovations and the fact that they do not consume their own agricultural produce, characteristics that, among these "sedentary nomads", take on an ideological aspect rooted in the myth itself: the Moken derive their nomad identity from the judgment that sentenced them to a life afloat, the symbolic immersion of Kèn—"*lemo lolo nganyan Kèn*", as commanded by Sibian.

The initial contact between Gaman and Sibian represents the relations between the Malays and the coastal civilization. The coming of Gaman the Malay betokens the intrusion of the rice-growing world into the Moken community. The Moken did not adopt rice-growing and were driven out by it. According to the epic, there were at the time tens of thousands of them, and they had reached a point where they had to choose either to extend their territory and

The Moken respect their ancestors and believe in spirits and try to make contact with them during rituals. Only the shaman, however, can communicate with the beyond via the "Post of the Spirits".

take up farming or to stabilize their population level and gather their food. Gaman acted as the catalyst in this clash of opposing life-styles.

In the myth, Sibian and her people are shown as an uncivilized sedentary society, while Gaman appears as a civilized nomad. By taking rice with them in the wanderings that followed the transgression committed by Kèn and Gaman, the Moken were in effect bearing civilization with them, thus redefining the terms and becoming, by virtue of the rice, a society both nomadic and civilized. By accompanying the Moken to the islands of the Mergui archipelago, Gaman comes to represent the rice borne away by a community that rejects the sedentary agricultural way of life but which, as a concession to the ascendancy of a dominant people for whom rice represents civilization, does not refuse to eat cultivated crops.

Sea and cereal thus became inseparably connected. Since the time when Gaman and rice, i.e. Islam and rice-growing, appeared on the scene, the Moken have been sea-going nomads, using their catch as currency wherewith to obtain rice for their own consumption. Only in the light of this ambivalent attitude of the Moken to rice can one understand their refusal to grow it for that purpose and their acceptance of the economic tyranny of the *taukès*, the Chinese traders and middlemen from whom they obtain it.

From myth to reality

Furthermore, by leaving rice-growing to others, the Moken are asserting their particular identity: rice-growers, whether Muslim or Buddhist, facilitate their self-awareness. Malays and Chinese are the middlemen preferred by the Moken who, like Gaman, barter pearls and other products of the sea for rice and other consumer goods, such as clothing. By enfolding their commercial links within a system of kinship, the middlemen secure the loyalty of the Moken, though it would perhaps be more truthful to put it the other way round. . . . The middlemen's ships ride in the midst of the Moken fleets which they exploit, and the Moken boats nuzzle up to their huge bellies to take on supplies.

The hull of the Moken boat, with its analogies to the human body, carries hewn into its flanks the history of the Moken people. The "mouth that eats" (*okang makan*) and the "rear that defecates" (*butut maé*) represent in visual and technical terms the nomad belief that accumulation spells death. The "belly" (*lakê*), i.e. the hold, cannot take in food unless it also discharges itself. The middlemen's ship is thus needed by the Moken, who accept as a necessary compromise the resultant reduction in their mobility. ■

The Moken live on boats roofed with palm-fronds.

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Disregarded by most approaches to development in the past fifty years, the Bedouin pastoral economy is coming back into favour. But for how long?

The return of the Bedouin

by Riccardo Bocco and Ronald Jaubert

Above, a falconer of the al-Khrayshah tribe in Jordan. The Bedouin train falcons and hunt with them or sell them to the emirs of the Gulf.

The vast areas of land in arid and semi-arid regions known as the steppe make up more than 70 per cent of the Arab Middle East. For several centuries the main form of human adaptation to this environment has been pastoral nomadism. The Bedouin (*badw*) who live in these regions take their name from the Arabic word for steppe, *bâdia*.* The rhythm of their lives has long been determined by the seasonal movements of their herds from their winter pastures in the arid regions to summer encampments close to wetter areas or oases.

Today the steppe is no longer an ecological unit, and the dangers of environmental degradation are great. In several regions natural plant life has given way to large-scale cereal cultivation. In others the spread of roads and the extraction of hydrocarbons, phosphates and cement have transformed the landscape. The introduction of new technology and expanding national and international markets have modified the pastoral economy. Government policies in favour of sedentarization have reduced the autonomy of the tribes and led them to practise new forms of mobility.

A changing tribal society

Traditionally the social counterpart of the pastoral economy of the steppes has been the tribe, an institution in which solidarity (*'asabiya*) and

* The term steppe (*bâdia*) is used to describe regions where the rate of precipitation varies between 50 and 350 mm annually, as opposed to the extremely arid desert areas (*sahra*).

"Once condemned for their 'anti-nationalist' and 'primitive' attitudes, local tribal organizations are now seen as virtue incarnate."

Above, in the Rub al-Khali desert, in Saudi Arabia, a Bedouin woman of the Yam tribe prepares flour and water paste to give to the camels as a supplement to their meagre forage.

Top, Bedouin tents in the desert near the Gulf of Aqaba (Jordan).

social bonds are based on blood ties (*nasab*). Networks of blood relationships contribute to the definition of tribal territories (*dirah*), within whose moving frontiers members of the group exercise the right to control resources, especially water and grazing land.

Although in the Arab world the tribe is the form of social organization typical of the people of the steppes, it is not exclusive to Bedouin societies. And just as pastoralism has never been a self-sufficient economic system, Bedouin societies have never been socially or politically isolated. Traditionally, the Bedouin economic system has formed part of a context of complementary and interdependent relationships with crop-growing regions and urban centres through trade in the products of herding, agriculture and craftsmanship and also through caravan transportation. Usually living on the fringes of the empires that have succeeded one another in the region, these societies have often been dependent on the interests and expansion strategies pursued by sedentary governments.

Half a century of modernization

The nomadic herders were far less marginalized, demographically, economically and politically, at the turn of the century than they are today. The fall of the Ottoman Empire led to great upheavals, and the emergence of new states had far-reaching consequences.

First of all the creation of new frontiers limited the herders' mobility and deprived them of considerable economic space. New legislation on landed property within the young states implied the abolition of rights over the tribal *dirah*.

Between the two World Wars state interests prevailed throughout the Middle East over local arrangements, and the tribal policies of the authorities (both Arab and colonial) set the seal on the decline of the tribal order.

Although the European powers took charge of military security in the steppes, they left the problem of the political integration of the Bedouin to the independent states. In the 1950s most states adopted programmes of sedentarization, which was considered the main if not the best solution to the nomad "problem". These

Sleep is light in the nomadic wastes. One's body, exhausted by the space . . . remembers the long road. Mountain trails swarm along one's backbone.

Ossip Mandelstam,
Russian poet (1892-1938)

programmes, supported and legitimized by international organizations, were based on an ideology of modernization subscribed to by regimes whose political orientations were very different. Most international experts and Arab regimes stigmatized nomadism as a backward social condition and condemned tribalism as a hindrance to the ideal of a united nation.

Sedentarization policies allowed several states to maintain tighter fiscal control over the former nomads and enabled the latter to benefit from public health and education services. However, the transformation of herders into farmers represented a denial of the importance of livestock-raising and the abandonment of grazing-land regeneration programmes in dry areas to the benefit of intensive and extensive agriculture that penalized the pastoral economy.

By the early 1970s, the effects of the policy of sedentarization together with the direct and indirect results of oil revenues were contributing to a transformation of the Bedouin economies into "multiple resource systems" in which livestock-raising and farming had become one option among a number of possibilities of salaried employment, notably in the civil service, the military and transportation.

Above, inside a Bedouin tent of the Sba'a tribe at Wadi al-Azib in Syria.

Top, Bedouin women milking ewes near Palmyra (Syria).

Left, a meal prepared during a religious festival by members of Saudi Arabia's al-Murrah tribe. Using his right hand, each guest serves himself to *kebssa*, the national dish of rice and meat.

Development out of control

Today rampant population growth and a growing agricultural deficit in the Arab countries of the Middle East are returning the arid regions to centre stage in matters of food security. Traditionally the main areas of sheep production,

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the arid and semi-arid regions are playing a decreasing role in the supply of meat to regional markets where demand has grown without precedent partly as a result of urbanization and revenue from oil.

In some countries of the Near East, such as Syria, the explosion of regional markets has led to a considerable increase in the number of sheep and has tightened the pressure on the arid and semi-arid zones, which until the 1960s were the primary food source for herds but today supply less than 20 per cent of their annual consumption.

On the regional level, government land and economic policies have not only contributed to breaking up the former management systems but have also made for considerable expansion of cultivated areas in the arid zones. At present the Bedouin share the use of their former territories with villagers in the farming areas, shop-keepers and livestock-raising entrepreneurs from the city whose interests often compete with those of the formerly nomadic populations.

The increased fragility of the steppes due to soil deterioration now appears to be one of the most disturbing effects of the development policies of the past thirty years. In spite of the modern technological facilities at their disposal, states have not been able to control the environment or ensure the success of models drawn up by experts.

Full speed astern!

Since 1960 when the majority of studies supported sedentarization and turning the steppe into cropland, studies carried out in Saudi Arabia have highlighted the need to develop systems for regenerating grazing land and drawn planners' attention to the existence of a traditional management system known on the Arabian Peninsula as *hima* (plural *ahmia*, literally, "protection" and, by analogy, "reserve").

Formerly used in the Near East as a means of controlling the degradation of grazing land, the *hima* system could also supply large reserves of forage for herds. According to Omar Draz, an FAO consultant, the reintroduction of such a system might have changed the populations' attitude to local resources by introducing a philosophy of protection and improvement and not simply exploitation.

In the present international context of environmental awareness, the latest approach favoured by social and natural scientists relies heavily on the *hima* system as a means of combating desertification. The system enjoys an Islamic seal of approval which may go back to the Prophet, but so far no detailed analytical study of its feasibility on the Near-Eastern steppe has been made. Furthermore, according to specialists in favour of *hima* programmes, their implementation would depend on the return of tribal land rights on the steppes, on a participatory approach that would take account of Bedouin tribal organization, and on governments taking a back seat in project management. This about-turn from the policies followed in the 1950s and 1960s is in itself a form of criticism of the sedentarization projects that were carried out.

One steppe at a time

The consensus that is forming around the *hima* programmes should not prevent us from asking some basic questions about them. Once condemned for their "anti-nationalist" and "primitive" attitudes, local tribal organizations are now seen as virtue incarnate. Their rehabilitation is based on an idyllic vision of the Bedouin tribes that, before state intervention, were supposed to manage the resources of the arid regions harmoniously by respecting ecological balances.

This perception, which sweeps away fifty years of history and "development", points to a useful alternative solution but it also raises many questions. Is it realistic? How will it be interpreted locally? What are the interests of those newly involved? What is the political weight of public administrative bodies and private groups in this new approach?

Development programmes are always based on ideas about the world that are the product of their time, and it might be asked in this case whether the presuppositions and knowledge of specialists are not backing a new ideology that may once again turn out to be short on analysis of the real situation. ■

A typical village southwest of Aleppo (Syria). Its inhabitants are former nomad pastoralists whose families settled there permanently in the 1930s.

THE EUROPEAN ODYSSEY OF THE GYPSIES

Gypsy caravans in the Balkans, where over five million Gypsies live today.

On the road

by Patrick Williams

Many Gypsy families have lived for generations in the same part of Europe, but they are still regarded as transient foreigners.

The Gypsies originated in northwest India. Sometime around the tenth century A.D. they embarked on the migration that scattered them all over the world. Paradoxically, it is through the knowledge of non-Gypsies (*Gadje*) that it has been possible to retrace this migration, largely on the basis of historical linguistics.

The Gypsy language has the same relationship to its mother tongue, Sanskrit, as Hindi, Gujarati and Punjabi, except that it only exists in a range of dialects that have been influenced by the languages of the lands through which its speakers travelled over the centuries. By studying the language spoken by a Gypsy today it is possible to discover the routes taken by his ancestors. The diversity of Gypsy dialects reflects the diversity of the routes they have taken.

However, research has been unable to tell us who they were during their time in India. Were they already nomads, blacksmiths and musicians? Were they outcasts or Rajputs defeated and dispossessed by Muslim invaders?

Whatever the truth may be, this uprooting from a homeland and this mass movement westward are not etched in Gypsy memory, which tends to indicate that they did not regard their travels as an exodus. Certainly traces of India are buried in their language and in some of their customs and beliefs, but these traces are not part of their conscious memory.

Moreover, Gypsy migration is linked to the history of the peoples among whom they live. They are not masters of their situation. The decision whether to leave or to stay or where to go is not for them to take. Perhaps this is why they prefer to live in the border regions of their adopted countries.

Members of the Nicolich family, above, have been "mechkar" (bear-leaders) for generations.

A study of the movements of groups of Gypsies since their arrival in Europe shows that, whether enforced or freely chosen, these movements are always a response to a change in the non-Gypsy environment. It would be a mistake to think that their migrations are over, as is shown by the arrival in western Europe of Gypsies fleeing political upheavals in the former Yugoslavia and in Romania.

Moving to the rhythm of the seasons

While migration is a response to events over which Gypsies have no control, nomadism is a form of social organization in its own right.

Gypsy movements are clearly organized according to the rhythms of the seasons, i.e. sedentary life through the long winter months and movement with the return of fine weather. But the sacred must surely play a part, too. In general it is the Christian holidays of Palm Sunday and All Saints' Day that signal the dates of departure and return, two dates when Gypsy families are accustomed to visit their dead. The cemetery in which the family graves are located is often the pole around which the family territory is organized.

Gypsies are found in groups of varying sizes that live or travel together. To describe these units, the Kalderash Romanies—one of the main Gypsy groups—use the word *kumpania* (company). When stationary, these units may gather in a neighbourhood or a "village"—the most frequent situation in central Europe—or live as scattered households among the dwellings of the other *Gadje* inhabitants. On the move, their composition may change at each stopping place. The *kumpania* is a body whose molecular structure changes according to circumstances while remaining faithful to its nature. Depending on whom they meet at each halting place, people move from one *kumpania* to another, taking with them expertise, stories and ways of life.

The extended family (three generations) is the stable nucleus of the nomadic *kumpania*. A child who grows up in a *kumpania* feels that he or she belongs to a permanent entity around which the world revolves. The family unit seems self-sufficient because of the distribution of skills and the way in which its different components complement each other. The men work at handicrafts, the women sell (the traditional organizational model for basket-weaving families), or else the adults sell some commodities (clothes), and the children others (wild flowers

and fruit). Although some craftsmen, such as blacksmiths, tinkers, silversmiths and basket-weavers, specialize in a single field, versatility is more highly prized than specialization. The important thing is to be able to cope with unpredictable situations.

Moving from group to group

The movement of individuals and families among the larger groups causes a constant reshaping of the social landscape as well as intermixing all parts of the society. A distinctive feature of Gypsy "nomadism", this movement from group to group is the result of several factors.

Through belonging to a kinship network, people can be "placed" by those they meet. Persons arriving in a new community try to find among their acquaintances those who will allow them to "latch onto" a family. As soon as their credentials are accepted, they become responsible members of their new community with the same rights and duties as the others.

Above and below, members of a "kumpania" (extended group) of Gypsies in their camp near Sliven, an industrial town in Bulgaria. They eke out a living by collecting linden, camomile and dogwood flowers for Bulgarian pharmaceutical companies.

To make the decision, to cast off every bond by which modern life and the weakness of our own hearts have chained us, to arm ourselves with the pilgrim's symbolic sack and staff, and to depart.

Isabelle Eberhardt
French writer and adventurer (1877-1904)

The sharing of values and cultural characteristics, which create a sense of fraternity among those who possess them, is another factor.

Once he is integrated into the community, the new arrival can benefit from its technical expertise. When out canvassing, a craftsman never refuses to take on a repair job that he cannot do himself, for he knows that among his "brothers" he is bound to find one with the necessary skills. The rule is that the profits are shared out equally, no matter what kind of job has been done. Co-operation is more highly regarded than individual success.

However, it is not always possible to move from one community to another. The itineraries of certain groups diverged from others so early on that their members seem to have nothing in common. In spite of the stereotyped view that *Gadje* societies have of them, all Gypsies do not accept one another across the board.

How to be invisible

Gypsy nomadism takes place on land that is already occupied. The relationship between nomads and their environment is a struggle for power—material power, obviously, but even more the power of legitimacy. Because they come from elsewhere and live differently, Gypsies are universally seen as intruders, foreigners. History has shown that the societies in which the Gypsies live want to see the back of them.

But the history of the Gypsies is the history of a people that does its best to play down this power struggle. Nomads use strategies of invisibility and fluidity that enable them to slip into the legislative, economic, geographical and other nooks and crannies that sedentary societies leave vacant.

Inside non-Gypsy territories therefore there are Gypsy territories of various shapes and sizes.

LIVING IN COMPANY

"Gypsies are found in groups of varying sizes. To describe these units the word 'kumpania' (company) is used. When stationary, these groups may gather in a neighbourhood or a 'village', or live as scattered households among the other inhabitants. On the move, their composition may change at each stopping place. Depending on whom they meet, people move from one "kumpania" to another, taking with them expertise, stories and ways of life."

Composed of routes and poles, they overlap and intermingle. They can be freely accessible or forbidden. Relationships between Gypsy groups present in the same region can vary between solidarity and competition, ignorance of each other's existence, and warfare.

The ways in which these territories are occupied and used differ according to the Gypsies' activities and their relationships with non-Gypsies. Gypsies' commercial activities require a minimum of conformity to local administrative procedures and the possession of a minimum of cultural skills. It is, for example, a good idea to speak the language of the people you wish to do business with. That is enough for some Gypsies, but others have a deeper knowledge of local customs.

Yet observation shows that it is often those communities that show the greatest cultural dynamism in keeping alive their language, customs (marriage is still usually within the Gypsy community) and traditions (music, oral literature, costumes), that are most at ease in non-Gypsy environments.

Gypsies have not remained aloof from the process of urbanization that has occurred in many parts of Europe. Nor have they missed out on technological progress. They have also understood how to get the most out of improvements in individual transportation facilities. Ways of moving about have changed. Families tend to stay in the same place for longer and longer periods, and the car is used for journeys occasioned by family events. If community life sometimes suffers from these forms of progress, it can also be enriched by making contact easier between groups living far apart.

Changing patterns of movement

Recent political changes in Europe have affected both migration and nomadism. Hundreds of Gypsy families have left the former communist countries to head for western Europe where they hope to receive refugee status. But in these countries increasing state intervention into the lives of the citizen is also affecting nomads, notably in the designation of places where they can camp, the organization of their stay, and the setting up of health care, schooling and vocational training programmes.

Gypsies have probably never had an easy time, historically speaking, but they have always managed to survive adversity and remain relatively independent. Movement in groups may have decreased, but the other characteristics that define Gypsy nomadism have been safeguarded. As the essential dynamic of Gypsy societies, individuals and families still continue to move between larger groups, but between fixed points rather than moving ones. ■

The Gypsy pilgrimage to Les Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer in the south of France. Legend has it that Mary, sister of the Virgin, and Mary, mother of James and John, fled there to escape persecution in Judaea. With them was their black servant, Sara, who became the patroness of the Gypsies. Below, Gypsies in procession carrying statues of the two saints.

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Forest rovers of the Amazon

by Howard Reid

The Maku of Amazonia enjoy roaming through the tropical forest and resist efforts to settle them down

Maku village-life in Colombia.

The Maku are a highly mobile group of Amazonian indigenous peoples who live in the rainforests of the northwest Amazon in Colombia and Brazil. Their territories stretch discontinuously from the northwest fringes of the rainforest around the river Guaviare in Colombia to the forests lying between the rivers Japura and Negro in Brazil, a distance of about 1,000 kms from one end to the other. There are six named sub-groups of the Maku, a word which has been imposed by outsiders and can be equated with the English term "Gypsy", each speaking a dialect of the Maku language family.

All the Maku live in the rainforest itself, away from the network of large rivers which weave through this area. The riversides are mostly occupied by ethnically distinct indigenous peoples or by white colonists. Both these latter groups live mainly by growing food crops and by fishing, while the Maku of the forests rely heavily on hunting, fishing and gathering. However, they do also grow crops, albeit on a much smaller scale than their riverside neighbours.

The Maku move around a great deal. Every day the men or women of any group will take off into the forest in search of game, fish, nuts, fruit, insects or raw materials for making baskets, weapons, houses—in fact almost everything they need to survive comes from the forest. Most Maku groups have a "base" village or longhouse with small gardens nearby from which they make their daily sorties into the forest, but everyone also spends weeks or months each year living in camps inside the forest proper. The location of these camps varies according to seasonal rhythms and the ripening of fruit and nuts, movements of game animals, water levels in streams and so on.

Sometimes an entire group will go to camp in the forest together, sometimes just a few families.

"Freedom of movement tends to produce egalitarian political systems—if there are no rules saying that you *must* remain under the control of the head of your group, political life remains in essence voluntary. If a leader abuses his authority, he is very likely to find himself without a group to lead."

When camps are going to be short—only two or three days—then usually only men and older boys go. On longer camps of a week or more the people usually move camp-site every few days.

Forest camps are a time of intense work for the men, who hunt and fish from before dawn until dusk. Their aim is not just to get enough food to feed everyone, but to build up a temporary surplus of meat and fish which will be used for ritual purposes or traded to the riverside peoples. The choice of where people go and for how long depends on many factors, including the kind of food desired, the time of year, and the state of rivers and streams. At any one time any Maku man or family has a wide range of choice in these matters, and it is quite normal for each family in a residential group to split up and go, all at the same time, to different parts of the forest in search of different products.

For the women, forest camps are a welcome change from the drudgery of the daily routine of farming and the processing of food which fills their days in the "base" village. In the cool of the forest shade they collect vines to weave baskets, or gather ants, termites or caterpillars to eat, and relax and play with their children at the camp-site.

Working on the move is fun, working in the same place is a bore

The Hupdu Maku, with whom I lived for two years, have two contrasting words for the activities they perform. "Bu'ui" means to work, that is to clear gardens, build houses or make tools.

Making curare, a substance made from plants which paralyses the motor nerves and is used as an arrow poison by the Maku.

This is generally considered to be disagreeable. The other word is "Get Ko'ai" which roughly means "to cruise in the forest". You may be fishing, hunting, foraging or just keeping an eye on what's going on, but everyone agrees that "Get Ko'ai" is a pleasant and valued way to spend your time. So at a very basic level working on the move is fun, while working in a fixed place—house or garden—is irksome.

Besides moving around in pursuit of food the Hupdu Maku also like to go and visit relatives. They live in small dispersed groups (one to five families, six to about forty individuals), and there are always close kin in neighbouring groups. The arrival of visitors is an exciting moment. The sharp-eyed children are usually the first to call out, "People are coming!" when visitors arrive, and then everyone in the house rushes to see who it is. Once the guests have entered the house, been shown where to sit and been given something to eat and drink, every resident greets them by asking them, "Have you arrived?" The reply is, "Yes, I have arrived, are you here?". The hosts reply that they are here, both parties thus affirming that it is indeed they who are greeting each other and not some malignant spirits masquerading as people.

The Nukak Maku in Colombia are the most mobile of all the Maku, and probably the most mobile people in South America. Every three-to-ten days they abandon their banana-leaf shelters and walk for a few kilometres through the forest to a new camp-site. Although they have small gardens in the forest, they do not use them as "bases" with more permanent houses in them as the other Maku do. We are not yet certain of the reasons for this extremely high level of mobility, but the Nukak were hostile to outsiders until very recently. For at least two centuries their region has been subjected to slave raiding, and more recently rubber gatherers, cattle ranchers and cocaine growers have tried to penetrate their lands. This has resulted in several massacres, isolated killings and outbreaks of epidemics. I am sure that the Nayak realize that it is much safer to keep on the move in these circumstances.

The Maku not only move as individuals, families or groups, they also very often move between groups. For them, as for many other nomads, people are free to choose where and with whom they spend their time.

Searching for clues in a forest of dreams

The Maku love the world they live in. I have often walked through the forest with old men who would call to birds or monkeys just for the pleasure of hearing them answer back. Talking to the animals makes them laugh. A big game

The base village or longhouse of the Baras, a Maku group living in Colombia.

kill, the discovery of honey or trees laden with fruits or nuts are occasions of great joy. In their dreams the Maku rove through the forest searching for clues—to dream of tobacco leaves is to find wild pigs (peccary) as their noses are the same shape as the leaves. A hunter will search for and sometimes find peccary after such a dream. The forest lives deep inside them and moving around it is a way of keeping it alive within them as well as deriving sustenance from it.

It is utterly wrong to say that nomads only move around because they have to. It is even more wrong to suggest that they would stop doing so if they could find other ways to subsist. The Maku, for example, have for decades had sufficient tools to clear big gardens and live more sedentary lives, but they do not want to. The Tuareg speak of houses as "the tombs of the city dwellers".

In the rainy season of 1975 there was a lot of heavy rain and the streams overflowed their banks, washing away the fish population and making it difficult to get around in the forest. There was little game and the hunters had no luck. One morning a young man shot a yellow agouti, a long-legged rodent, which weighed about one kilo. Bringing it home he gave it to his older brother, the leader of the group, who pointedly did not offer any of it to the three families who had been staying for the past month, nor to his mother's brother, although he was a resident member of the group.

Failing to share meat is the worst crime imaginable to the Maku, so the offended parties stormed out of the house, muttering about the rudeness of the leader. A week later a drinking party took place and when all were getting drunk a scuffle broke out, there was a lot of shouting and all those who had been denied the agouti meat stormed out of the house, setting fire to the shelter a guest family had been staying in as a protest.

The guests returned to their own base village and the mother's brother set up a base in an old garden of his about three hours' walk away. A year later all were on friendly terms again, but the ex-resident never returned to live with that group.

Being able to move is therefore an extremely important mechanism in dispute settlement for the Maku, and for most other nomad groups. Freedom of movement also tends to produce egalitarian political systems—if there are no rules saying that you *must* remain under the control of the head of your group, political life remains in essence voluntary. If a leader abuses his authority he is very likely to find himself without a group to lead. The Maku are extremely opposed to other Maku giving them orders and will simply leave if one person gets too bossy.

This is not a question of the absence of social hierarchies or inability to develop them, as found in property-based societies. It is a positive intention *not to let inequality develop in the first place.*

When the Maku stopped moving

In the 1970s Salesian missionaries in the Upper Rio Negro, Brazil, stepped up their pressure on the Hupdu Maku to stop wandering in the forest and build permanent settlements surrounded by large gardens, with a chapel and a school. They "invited" six or more Maku local

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groups to come together in this task, at a stroke creating villages of 120-150 people. The missionaries' intermediaries in this policy were local riverside people who effectively ordered the Maku to comply. Several sites were selected, with the eventual aim of concentrating all the Maku there (they were then living in about thirty-eight separate communities). As incentives the missionaries offered them handouts of clothes and manioc flour to tide them over until their new gardens began to yield.

All the main concentration villages share a very similar subsequent history which was roughly as follows. For a few months the Maku were interested. There was a lot of unpleasant "Bu" (work) to do, and not enough "Get Koai" (cruising or foraging), but there was free food, clothes and the strange missionaries to watch. Within months, however, tensions began to mount. All the game for several hours' walk around the concentration villages was hunted out and the streams stripped of fish.

After six months the missionaries went away for a break. The Maku then brewed a big batch of manioc beer and a large-scale brawl ensued. The people broke up into their old small groups and dispersed throughout the forest. Hearing of this, the missionaries sent out the riverside teachers to round up the Maku and bring them back to the concentration village. The missionaries banned parties, dancing and the brewing and drinking of alcohol. The Maku remained, especially those who were keen for their children to learn a little Portuguese, reading, writing and basic arithmetic. But life was not good there.

Pooh, a Maku friend, summed up the mission experience in this way: "The priests come here and they tell us to stop drinking beer and dancing and playing our sacred trumpets. This is like a man coming to us and taking all our food away. What should we do? Without food, without music there is no movement in the world. People are sad, become sick and die."

How should we meet the needs of nomads?

Countless other tales from all round the world could be told of the sufferings of nomadic people forced to stop travelling by outsiders of superior military, political or economic strength. I have never come across a case of nomads who *want* to abandon their nomadism. Nomads not only need to move, they *like* to move.

However, most governments feel that the only way to protect nomads is to pin them to the ground so they can be counted, taught, vaccinated, taxed and the like. Yet, the few experiments which have been tried out in bringing these services to nomads on the move have proved highly successful. It is not difficult to provide mobile medical aid and vaccination programmes, even in tropical rainforests.

Education presents more problems, but it is far from impossible, especially if the people themselves are motivated and want to learn. Once basic educational skills have been implanted in the people themselves they will be able to teach and travel with minimal support.

Many young Maku parents regret that they cannot speak Portuguese or Spanish, do not know how to handle money and are therefore exploited. However, they do not wish to sacrifice their way of life as the price to pay for being able to understand what's being said on their riverside neighbour's satellite TV set.

The last and perhaps most important factor is land. The world's remaining nomads occupy the most marginal lands on the planet—deserts, rainforests, tundra and steppe. These rugged and beautiful wildernesses are, however, hardly the most fertile places on Earth. For people to survive without radically altering these environments they need a lot of space. It is essential that nomads be granted proper title to their lands and that this title should extend to the subsoil. Extractive industries have caused horrendous suffering to nomadic peoples from the Arctic to Australia. Only with secure land rights can nomads both continue to move and choose in what ways they wish to engage with the rest of humanity. ■

Left, a hallucinogenic drug used in rituals is being prepared from plants.

Who is responsible for the crisis of Africa's nomadic herders and their traditional lands?

A group of Maasai burning their village. They usually do this to keep the area clean and to kill parasites. Often they do not burn their villages but leave them empty when they move away.

The vanishing African herdsman

by John Galaty

Pastoralists make productive use of the most inhospitable regions of Africa—the arid and semi-arid lands—by raising livestock for their own subsistence and to provide meat for teeming cities and crowded farms. Today, most of them live in a wide, curving band of savannah. Specialized herders live in the drier regions with up to 500 mm rainfall, agropastoralists—who tend livestock but depend on crop cultivation for their livelihood—in a larger zone with up to 750 mm of rainfall per year. Eastern Africa, a region stretching from Ethiopia and the Sudan in the north to Tanzania in the south and covering 20 per cent of the area of Africa, is populated by half the continent's cattle and the vast majority of its pastoralists.

The dry rangelands have fewer domestic animals per land area than do the islands of highlands, where both animals and people live in high densities. In these areas of scanty rainfall

Life is a bridge. Cross over it, but build no house on it.

Indian proverb

Maasai goatherds of the Samburu tribe (Kenya).

and sparse vegetation, where agriculture is generally impossible or very risky, livestock require relatively large areas of grazing to thrive. A demographic explosion has resulted in a flow of migrants from swollen highland communities into the arid and semi-arid lands, which to them appear relatively empty. However, people who have lived for a long time in the drylands are well aware that these areas have a low potential for supporting human communities, and know that all available sources are currently expended in supporting them through animal husbandry and dryland agriculture.

These facts do not, however, mitigate the desire of land-hungry peasants to occupy neighbouring rangeland, nor slow the steps they take to do so. Many enclaves of relatively more fertile land within the African rangelands are experiencing piecemeal enclosure, whether in the oases of the Sahara, the riverine valleys of western and eastern Africa, the fringes of the Kalahari in Botswana, or the mountains and swamps of east Africa. The Maasai in the plains of southern Kenya and northern Tanzania are noteworthy in being subjected to more far-reaching threats to their land than are perhaps members of any other community on the continent.

An encampment of the pastoral Maasai, who live in Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania, usually consists of around fifty igloolike dwellings (below and opposite page).

In Kenya, corruption in land allocations during privatization, sales by poor pastoralists once they receive land titles, and appropriation of rich rangeland for parks and reserves, all add up to a massive haemorrhage of the land holdings of Maasai herders. In Tanzania, with its new policy of leasing rural land to local and foreign entrepreneurs, Maasai residents are being dispossessed at an even greater pace. Circumventing local villages, which theoretically serve as land-holding bodies, leasehold titles for thousands and thousands of hectares of land are being allocated to government officials, local big men and foreign companies. Local producers wake up to find fences cutting them off from land they have always used, or see tractors clear-cut and plough fields that stretch to the horizon where their pastures had lain. In the idiom of enterprising Tanzanians today, the Maasai districts represent the last frontier, and they are the "cowboys" coming to seize land

from the "Indians", that is, their fellow Tanzanian citizens, the Maasai.

The discourse of dispossession

To understand this inexorable though not yet inevitable process of dispossession, we must look to the discourse, woven out of contradictory ideas, which motivates and justifies the appropriation of pastoral land.

The first of these ideas suggests that the range is *over*utilized by pastoralists, who degrade it through overstocking. Pasture loss, erosion and dust-filled valleys are seen to result from the paradox of common property: since pastoralists individually reap economic benefits while collectively sharing environmental costs, they lack incentives to control the growth of their herds. From this analysis it follows that common resources can only be sustained if they are privatized or put under state control. But this argument has been refuted on many grounds, and the policies which follow from it have been subjected to severe criticism.

Firstly, it ignores the role played by community institutions, legitimized by the authority of tradition and by local participation, in managing environmental resources. Secondly, it reflects the view that individual producers are competitors who make decisions independently of one another, while herders form overlapping networks of communication through which strategies are co-ordinated. Thirdly, the argument assumes that the most important determinant of grassland quality is the number of animals using the range. However, in most grazing systems in Africa, degradation of the range environment is primarily correlated with annual rainfall and local soil quality rather than stocking levels.

The image of an Africa afflicted with erosion and dust stems from the occurrence of lower than average rainfall over the last thirty years. In the dry season or during drought, the abundance of pasture depends more on the amount of rainfall received than on the proportion of already dead cellulose livestock do or do not eat. After a drought, the seeds of annual grasses lie in the dust ready to germinate, and the roots of perennial grasses lie deep below ground ready to regenerate when rains come. In fact, in many pastoral areas, understocking is a more serious problem than overstocking, since undergrazing leaves unpalatable, woody and unproductive herbage that harbours parasites and stifles the growth of new grasses.

A second key idea, contradictory to the first, suggests that under pastoral use rangeland resources are *under*utilized. The same herders

"Many enclaves of relatively more fertile land are experiencing piecemeal enclosure, whether in the oases of the Sahara, the riverine valleys of western and eastern Africa, the fringes of the Kalahari, or the mountains and swamps of east Africa. The Maasai are being subjected to more far-reaching threats to their land than perhaps any other community."

Maasai hut in Tanzania.

who are accused of overexploiting the range are also accused of underexploiting it! This myth stems in part from the visual contrast between crowded highland settlements and scattered pastoral homesteads, between cultivated fields that bear the imprint of human labour and regenerating pastures that rest unused for much of the year.

It has also been argued that privatization brings about more productive use of land, in this case through moving pastoral land into farming or through stimulating improved forms of animal husbandry. However, privatization may serve in the short run as a means of simply accumulating assets. Pastoral land may be sought by speculators who covet land titles that can be used as collateral for credit. Outsiders can buy such land cheaply and invest elsewhere the loans they procure on the basis of that land, which they leave unused and often unoccupied. Under these conditions, range productivity *falls* because of privatization. But even when land enclosures and transfers do result in higher output, the results must be balanced against capital invested. Since politically powerful land-holders benefit when the government subsidizes water improvements, the social costs of diverting public resources to private gain must be weighed against the output of the now irrigated land.

Arrayed in all their finery, young Maasai head for the Eunoto ceremony which marks their transition from warriors to mature men.

The tragedy of enclosure

In fact, the true tragedy of the rangelands occurs at the moment of its enclosure, when it is in everyone's interest to claim as much available land as possible, independent of the common good. The view that under private or state ownership rural land tends to be better managed must also be scrutinized. In countries where rangelands have been declared state property, community management has been undermined, creating chaotic systems of "open access" to the detriment of the range environment. Rarely has the state had the means (or the will) to monitor range use with the knowledge and attention of local herding communities.

Below, the Maasai dwelling consists of an armature of branches covered with earth mixed with cow dung and chopped straw.

After privatization, rangelands are often both underutilized, as we have seen, and overutilized, as when individual ranchers use private land in conjunction with adjacent common property for intensive commercial use. If we seek to explain the disruption of local resource management and time-tried techniques of food production in these areas, we should seek it in the erosion of indigenous rights over land rather than in the erosion of the land itself.

There are good reasons to rely on smallholding herders and agropastoralists as agents of conservation and development rather than on private entrepreneurs. When we realize that the beneficiaries of enclosure and privatization are often not those who will dedicate their lives to the land, we might also be discovering the roots of the twin crises in Africa's arid and semi-arid lands, environmental decline and increasing poverty. ■

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UNESCO IN action

A VIDEO CONFERENCE ON LITERACY

There are currently more than 900 million illiterate adults worldwide, 65 per cent of whom are women. Of the 132 million children who have never set foot in a classroom, two-thirds are girls and one-third live in Africa south of the Sahara. In developing countries girls and minority groups often have no opportunity to attend school, and there is a crippling lack of books, teachers and equipment. In industrialized countries there are relapses into functional illiteracy on the part of adults who have attended school and a decline in reading among children addicted to television. The technological revolution wrought by computers, satellites, fibre optics and cellular networks are changing the notion of literacy. To highlight the impact of these technologies on education, UNESCO celebrated International Literacy Day on 8 September with a Paris-Washington video conference that was transmitted live over satellite to audiences in North America, Europe and North Africa. Educators, policy makers and communications experts from around the world discussed literacy work, formal and non-formal education and the challenges they pose as the 21st century approaches.

INTERNATIONAL FORUM ON BIODIVERSITY

"Biodiversity: Science and Development—Towards a New partnership" was the theme of an international forum held at UNESCO Headquarters from 5 to 9 September. Some 600 scientists, policy-makers, economists, educators and business leaders took part in the forum, the largest gathering of its kind since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 where delegates signed the Convention on Biological Diversity. Biodiversity, or biological diversity, is a term that encompasses the variety of all the earth's ecosystems, plants, animals and micro-organisms. Themes studied at the forum included: approaching the unity of life through biological diversity; biodiversity's ecological functions; a global inventory and monitoring system; conservation of biodiversity including our daily urban environment; utilization of resources for agriculture and industry; and biodiversity's ethical and cultural dimensions.

WORLD HERITAGE: 4 NEW SITES

At the 17th annual meeting of the World Heritage Committee, held in Cartagena (Colombia) 4 new natural heritage sites were added to the World Heritage List. Two of them are in Japan. The Shirakami mountains in northern Honshu contain the last remnant of undisturbed beech forest that once covered the mountain slopes of northern Japan. Yakushima, on Yaku island, is famed for its ancient Japanese cedars. The El Vizcaino Whale Lagoons, in Mexico's Baja peninsula, contain major breeding and wintering sites for the grey whale. The site also protects several species of marine turtles, sea lions, elephant seals and wildfowl. Also selected was the Tubbataha Reef Marine Park, in the Philippines. ■

BIOETHICS COMMITTEE ACTION

UNESCO's International Bioethics Committee (IBC) was established in September 1993. After consulting with its correspondents throughout the world, notably national ethics committees, the IBC held its second session in September 1994 and embarked on its major task—preparing an international instrument on the protection of the human genome. The 3-day meeting examined the ethical implications of genetic advances. Among the subjects discussed were genetic screening and testing, gene therapy and the teaching of bioethics. IBC president Noëlle Lenoir spoke of the transformations that took place last year in the "international bioethical landscape", referring to advances in French legislation and the work of international organizations including the World Health Organization, the Council of Europe and the European Commission. The September 1994 issue of the *UNESCO Courier* ("A Code for Living: the Ethics of Human Engineering") was devoted to this major problem of our time.

THE KOMITAS QUARTET

On 15 November the Komitas Quartet is giving a concert at UNESCO headquarters in Paris featuring music by Brahms, Vartan, Schubert and Komitas. Created in 1924, the Quartet has a worldwide reputation. The concert is one of 14 being given by the Quartet on a tour through France, Germany and Switzerland to celebrate the 125th anniversary of the birth of Sogomon Sogomonian, known as Komitas Vardapet (1869-1935), the ecclesiastic and composer after whom the group is named. The musicians play on instruments made by Guarnerius (a famous Italian family of stringed-instruments makers of the 17th and 18th centuries), which lends a unique resonance to their music. Their repertoire ranges from the classical to the modern with a special emphasis on Armenian music. ■

COMMENTARY BY FEDERICO MAYOR

A halt to advancing deserts

UNESCO's programme on the arid zone, one of the first international scientific co-operation programmes to be set up within the United Nations system, was launched in Algiers in April 1951. The programme continued until 1964 and contributed not only to the mobilization of the scientific community concerned, but also to the development of technical assistance programmes and projects and to the opening and expansion of research, training and development assistance institutions in many countries. On the scientific level, it led to the preparation of the "Map of the World's Arid and Semi-Arid Zones" and the publication of some thirty volumes in the "Arid Zone Research" series.

From 1964 onwards work continued within the framework of a broader programme of "natural resources research" and the International Hydrological Decade, which focused on the advancement of scientific knowledge and the preparation of methods based on specific case-studies.

With the start of the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) programme in 1971, arid and semi-arid zone activities took a new turning based on an integrated multidisciplinary approach—in this instance one in which the social and the exact sciences were combined.

It was around this time that the ecological crisis revealed by the drought in the Sahel reached its climax. This crisis was one of the principal factors behind the convening of the United Nations Conference on Desertification, which was held in Nairobi in August-September 1977, and with which UNESCO was closely associated.

More recently, UNESCO vigorously supported the initiative taken by France, with the support of several other countries, on the occasion of the Arche de la Défense Summit in 1989, which resulted in the setting up of the Observatory of the Sahara and Sahel (OSS). We regarded this venture as a demonstration of concern for the development problems and efforts to combat desertification of the twenty countries in and around the Sahara and as a political gesture designed to encourage co-operation among and in favour of these countries.

A COMBAT ON MANY FRONTS

Desertification is a global environmental problem, and the solutions to it are bound up with those that must be found in order to create conditions for sustainable development that will meet the immediate needs of the population and guarantee the long-term protection of the environment. UNESCO thus favours a global approach in which the fight against poverty, literacy work, the management of population dynamics and the rational use of natural resources are all linked. Only through an interdisciplinary effort conducted on several fronts by partners working in unison can the living conditions of disadvantaged populations be lastingly improved.

Efforts to combat desertification must not be considered outside the social and human context in which they are undertaken. They will never be effective if the people who are to carry them out and benefit from them are not convinced of the need for them and of the advantages they will bring. The better informed local populations are, the more motivated they will be to take part in this work. Education for all is therefore clearly essential. Given the requisite knowledge and know-how, the populations of countries affected by desertification will react with greater speed and effectiveness, making sustainable development more likely to spread throughout the world. ■

The monastery of Alcobaça

From the spirit of St. Bernard to the idyll of Pedro and Inês

by José Augusto Seabra

Few monuments of outstanding universal importance have been so closely tied to the history of a people than the Cistercian monastery of Santa Maria in Alcobaça, a town in central Portugal. It was founded in 1153—the year of the death of St. Bernard, one of the great spiritual leaders of the Cistercian order, on land granted to the Cistercians by Afonso Henriques, the first king of Portugal, in gratitude for their contribution to the reconquest of his country from the Moors. The "white monks"—so called because of their white habits, symbolizing the austerity and purity of monastic life—built one of the most beautiful monastic houses in Europe on this site. It stands as testimony to the distinguished religious, cultural, political and social role they played in the emergence of a nation which by virtue of its great maritime discoveries would become a beacon of Christian civilization throughout the world.

The Cistercians had arrived in Portugal

The vast Cistercian monastery of Alcobaça, founded in 12th-century Portugal, is a masterpiece of religious architecture. Since 1989 it has been inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List.

Above, the monks' dormitory.
Below right, the façade of the church of Santa Maria d'Alcobaça. Its Gothic portal is flanked by statues of St. Benedict and St. Bernard.

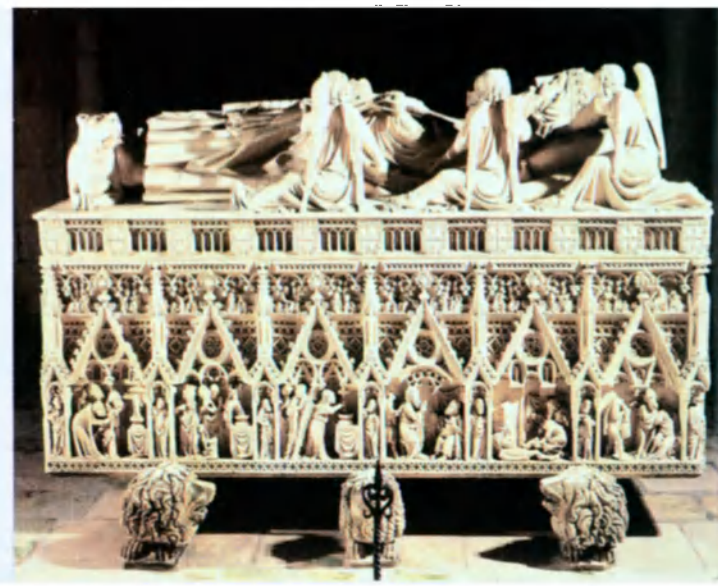
ten years earlier, just after the kingdom had been recognized by Castile. They took an active part in strengthening the nation, notably as organizers of agriculture. These "agronomist monks" maintained close ties with the Portuguese sovereigns, who in return granted them considerable powers, including the right to create boroughs by charter in order to clear and populate the land around them. The monastery soon began to prosper. In the thirteenth century Alcobaça was a rich and influential community whose authority stretched over vast fertile lands, thirteen boroughs, four sea ports and two castles.

Later, these powers expanded and contracted according to the will of the crown. Until the advent of the liberal monarchy, the Cistercian order intermittently played a significant role in Portugal's intellectual and political life. While pursuing its educational activities in the sixteenth century, the monastery became an important cultural centre, distinguishing itself in areas such as historiography and the plastic arts, especially sculpture. It endowed itself with a printing press and a library that were to become famous.

An ideal of ascetic simplicity

What makes the Monastery of Santa Maria unique and justifies its place on UNESCO's World Heritage List is its architectural beauty and harmony. Built in the Gothic style characteristic of the old Cistercian abbeys, it embodies the ideal of simplicity and asceticism that St. Bernard preached, a simplicity that successive transformations over the centuries have not modified.

This spiritual vision is etched into the smallest details of the monastery church, which has a large, elegant façade composed of three sections. An early Gothic portal with seven archivolts resting on seven columns is flanked by statues of St. Benedict on the left and St. Bernard on



Opposite each other in the transept of the church are the tombs of king Pedro I and Inês de Castro (late 14th century). Their tragic love affair inspired a literary tradition.

the right. Austere and hieratic, the nave extends beneath a quadrangular vault of pointed arches to the chancel, whose sublime vertical upsweep creates an impression of simple grandeur. The transept, also under a ribbed vault, contains two chapels illuminated by rose windows and gives the church its symbolic form of a Latin cross.

From Burgundian art to the Manueline style

The tombs of the first Portuguese kings, queens, princes and princesses in the transept or royal pantheon attest to the monarchy's attachment to this Cistercian monastery. The most famous tombs are those of King Pedro I and Inês de Castro, whose tragic love affair spawned a literary tradition stretching from Camoëns and Velez de Guevara to Henry de Montherlant's *La Reine Morte*. The two lovers lie in facing tombs as if ready to look each other in the eyes again when they rise from the dead on Judgment Day. Inês, whom Prince Pedro had secretly married, was murdered in Coimbra in 1355 on the orders of the prince's father, King Afonso IV. When Pedro succeeded to the throne, he had the remains of his beloved solemnly brought to Alcobaça and ordered her murderers to be executed. Their ill-fated union is depicted on the friezes that adorn the sides of the tall sarcophagi in which they lie, watched over by angels. Combining secular and religious motifs, the decorative carving is of a rare beauty.

In the sixteenth century, a sacristy in the Manueline style was added to the church, together with chapels decorated with a profusion of sculptures. The most famous chapel, that dedicated to "The Death of St. Bernard", is considered to be one of the finest works of the Alcobaça sculptors. Several other buildings have been added at different times to the original Burgundian framework of the monastery. Among them are the cloister of Dom Dinis, the chapter-house, the dormitory, the monks' hall, the kings' hall decorated with *azulejo* panels, the refectory, and an eighteenth-century kitchen with a monumental chimney and great basin.

But the entire complex preserves an austerity and simplicity of which St. Bernard would have approved. The monastery of Alcobaça remains the same masterpiece of Gothic Cistercian art that has impressed so many historians and visitors, including the English writer and traveller William Beckford, who penned unforgettable pages about it. And it still bears the indelible imprint of a people whose genius "gave new worlds to the world." ■

JOSÉ AUGUSTO SEABRA
is a Portuguese poet and essayist who was formerly his country's ambassador to UNESCO and is now a member of the Organization's Executive Board. He is the author of several volumes of poetry, essays and criticism, including *Fernando Pessoa ou le Poétodrame* (José Corti, Paris, 1988), and wrote the preface to the bilingual (French-Portuguese) edition of Pessoa's important work, *Mensagem* (José Corti/UNESCO, UNESCO Collection of Representative Works, Paris, 1988).

The two lovers

"In the monastery are the famous tombs of King Pedro I of Portugal and his mistress, Inês de Castro. The two lovers lie in facing tombs, as if ready to look each other in the eyes again when they rise from the dead on Judgment Day."

Literacy: How to reach the excluded

Since International Literacy Year in 1990, many things have happened in the world of education. The Declaration adopted in that year at the conclusion of the World Conference on Education for All held at Jomtien (Thailand) to strengthen adult education, promote universal primary education and limit demographic growth—to cite just the main goals—has not gone unheeded. The World Bank has doubled its lending to basic education in the last three years, UNESCO has doubled its resources for literacy and primary education since 1990, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) doubled its expenditure on basic education between 1991 and 1992. Aid from donor agencies has also increased. Encouraging results have been reported from Bangladesh, Egypt and India, which alone account for a third of the world's illiterate. After the Jomtien Conference, Mauritius drew up a Master Plan for Education which has become a model for small island states.

But much still remains to be done for some 948 million illiterate adults and for the children—20 per cent of all children worldwide—who are not enrolled in school. And there are still plenty of problems for those children who are in school. In Africa south of the Sahara, for example, it is not exceptional to find classes with over one hundred pupils, only a handful of whom have desks and seats. In Latin America and the Caribbean, where school enrolment rates are rising, barely half the pupils finish primary school. Failure is inevitable when a teacher has to work with six different age groups at once and when children live in conditions that make it difficult if not impossible for them to learn their lessons. No wonder they turn their back on school and go out to try to earn a living.

When it comes to the quality of teaching, problems are not confined to the Third World. A recent survey carried out by the U.S. Department of Education revealed that some 47 per cent of America's 191 million adults have reading, writing and mathematical skills so limited that they cannot function effectively in the workplace. Young adults (21 to 25 years old) showed literacy skills up to 14 per cent lower than those in the same age group who took part in a similar survey in 1985.

ONE POSSIBLE ANSWER: NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

Because of deficiencies in "official" schools, new "non-formal" programmes, so called because they are outside state-run school systems, have been launched in many parts of the

Aid for refugee children

Since 1981, "Enfants réfugiés du monde", a French association that works with a number of international organizations including the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Relief and Works Administration (UNRWA) and UNESCO, has been helping child victims of war, violence and exile. Its teams of doctors, educators, relief workers and technicians set up short- and long-term programmes on behalf of young west Saharans, Palestinians, Bosnians, Brazilians, Mexicans, Salvadorians, Guatemalans, Belizeans and Lebanese. The children are provided with food and material aid, medical care, schooling and hospitality in crèches and leisure centres. ■

For further information, contact Enfants réfugiés du monde, 34 rue Gaston-Lauriau, 93100 Montreuil, France. Tel: (33 1) 48 59 60 29; Fax: (33 1) 48 59 64 88.

Sacred music of the world

From 8 to 15 October, the historic Moroccan city of Fez hosted the first festival of the world's sacred music. The aim of the festival was to encourage contact between major cultural and spiritual traditions. The organizers adopted an original, pluridisciplinary approach—the concerts were accompanied by film shows and exhibitions. ■

world. Taking advantage of decentralizing trends in education, they are intended to fill the gaps of formal education. They have many advantages. Lessons are adapted to local conditions and needs, timetables are flexible, modern teaching methods are used and community participation is encouraged.

In Bangladesh, to take one example, a non-governmental organization called *Saptagram Nari Swanivar Parishad* (The Seven Villages Women's Self-Reliance Movement), now serving 900 villages, has designed a special course for women. Taught by local instructors, literacy and arithmetic lessons are tailored to the requirements of daily life. Women who were once threatened with punishment, even expulsion from their villages, if they did anything but domestic chores, now work the land or work in factories and market their products themselves. The immediate result of literacy here has been the affirmation of women's identity.

In Rajasthan, a 7-million-dollar programme co-financed by Sweden's International Development Authority and the Indian government, is offering villagers a wide range of educational possibilities, from popular theatre to the electronic media. In Maharashtra the PROPEL project (Promoting Primary and Elementary Education) is aimed at the 3,000 girls excluded from official primary education. They learn how to do book-keeping, read the newspapers and become independent.

On the other side of the world Mexico has revolutionized its educational system, by decentralizing it, increasing its budget by 86 per cent and spending $100 million to improve pre-school education in ten of its poorest states.

Brazil is also looking for solutions to the problems of its eight million children forced into work, crime or prostitution. The PRONAICA programme, one of the major components of the country's ten-year plan to promote education for all, completely supports children from underprivileged social backgrounds while remaining open to their families.

With support from UNICEF, the World Bank and UNESCO, the *Escuela nueva* programme undertaken by the Colombian government is seeking to adapt education to the needs of rural life, promote study in small groups and provide each school with a library. ■

Africa's quest for quality of life

The Amadou Hampâté Bâ Centre for Development and the Quality of Life recently opened in Bamako. The Centre is named for the great Malian writer who for 50 years collected and transcribed African songs, tales and myths in order to retrace the continent's history. It seeks to give Africans an opportunity to work out their future and to find solutions to their development problems by referring to their own traditions as well as using the resources of the modern world. Among those participating in the work of the new Centre are artists, bearers of traditional knowledge, specialists in old and new forms of communication, support staff from the Malian administration and members of community associations. ■

Further information may be obtained from:
MISSIRAI, Rue 20x25, Bamako, Mali.
Tel and fax: (223) 22 30 82.

The first world conference on special education

From 7 to 14 June, the representatives of several United Nations agencies and specialists and educators from some 60 countries met in Salamanca (Spain) to study ways of improving special education. This form of education is not only intended for physically handicapped children but for those who experience various forms of learning difficulty. The distinction between institutions for so-called "normal" children and those for "handicapped" children is now regarded as an obstacle to the social integration of these children. Special education thus needs to be rethought and readapted. The Salamanca Conference was an opportunity to exchange ideas on this subject based on a wide variety of experience. ■

SOURCES:

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- *EFA 2000*, quarterly information bulletin published by UNESCO for the Secretariat of the International Consultative Forum on Education for All.

For further information please contact the Secretariat of the Forum on Education for All, UNESCO, Place de Fontenoy, 75352 Paris 07 SP, France. Tel.: (33-1) 4568-0890, Fax: (33-1) 4065-9406.

- *Education for All—Making it Work*, published by the Basic Education Division, UNESCO, Place de Fontenoy, 75352 Paris 07 SP, France.27.9.94

GREENWATCH

RED ALERT FOR THE EARTH'S GREEN BELT

BY FRANCE BEQUETTE

Right, felling trees in the tropical forest of the Indian state of Sikkim in the eastern Himalayas.

"TROPICAL forest" is the common name for what specialists call "rainforest", a term coined in 1898 by the botanist Andreas Schimper to designate forests that grow in a perpetually humid environment, receiving more than 2,000 millimetres of rain per year. In these conditions trees with smooth trunks can grow to more than sixty metres high. Their tops join together in what is known as the canopy, a roof of thick vegetation that keeps out the light.

Like a scarf girdling the equator, rainforests cover about 9.5 million square kilometres. The largest single tropical forest zone is in South America. Only five million square kilometres of rainforest now exist in tropical Asia and central Africa. A report published by UNESCO in 1991 reveals that Côte d'Ivoire has lost 75 per cent of its forest since 1960, and Ghana 80 per cent. In 25 years the Philippines have lost 15 out of 16 million hectares. By the year 2000 the forests of Viet Nam may well be no more than a fond memory. As British ecologist Edward Goldsmith noted in his *Report on Planet Earth*, published in 1990, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) estimated in the early 1980s that 100,000 square kilometres of rain forest were being lost each year. The American Academy of Sciences was far more pessimistic, deploring the loss of twice that area. The situation in Brazil seems to support the Academy's claim, since Brazil lost 48,000 square kilometres in 1988 alone.

Lowland forests, by far the biggest and the most easily accessible, have suffered most from human exploitation. Although less developed because of lower temperatures, rainfall variability and poorer soil, highland forests still play a very important role in preventing soil erosion and lowland flooding. Mangroves are a kind of rainforest growing in the salt-water and silt-rich coastal regions and along the banks of rivers flowing through forests. The mangrove forests in the Sundarbans region of the Ganges delta are the world's largest.

WHO IS TO BLAME?

Although they cover only 7 per cent of the earth's surface, rainforests are the home of more than half of the planet's plant species. With massive media support, international organizations are rightly insisting on the need to preserve biodiversity, which is threatened from all sides, most notably by competition from agriculture. Again according to FAO, some 250 million farmers live in rainforests around the world. In search of land for crop-growing and livestock-raising, they occupy forest areas owned by the state, which is often unable to control access to it. These farmers have no recognized right to the areas they occupy. Alain Karsenty and Henri-Félix Maître of the forestry department of France's Centre for International Co-operation in Agronomic Research for Development (CIRAD) in a report to the XIth Directorate of the Commission of the European Communities published in 1993 stress that "recognition of property rights (not necessarily in the Western sense of the term 'property') for local communities is one of the necessary (but not sufficient) conditions for joint management of the forest with those who live in it."

Peoples who have lived for a long period in these zones are well adapted to their environment, but this is not the case with the new arrivals who grow cash crops such as cocoa and coffee. They follow the roads and trails gouged out by the loggers, thereby infiltrating the dense forest where, mainly by using fire, they create "frontiers" which push back the forest. "This interrelationship between exploitation

THE DIMINISHING OZONE LAYER

The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) reports that in 1993 low ozone levels were measured over most of South America. Ozone concentrations fell by 7% above Sao Paulo and by 3 to 4% above Rio de Janeiro. In March and April 1994 the depletion of the ozone layer above Europe, Siberia and the adjacent polar-ocean areas was more than 10% below long-term mean values. ■

FUEL FOR KANGWANE'S FIRES

An American reader, Suzy Liebenberg, former co-ordinator of Ecolink's environmental community development programme, has written to tell us about an interesting project in the eastern Transvaal lowveld of South Africa, where members of the rural community of Kangwane are growing Leucaena trees around their homes and in their vegetable gardens. The species grows quickly and produces many stems from ground level rather than a single trunk. This makes it ideal for coppicing, which involves cutting a few stems from each tree annually, thus ensuring renewable supplies of wood. Tree seedlings are provided at a reasonable cost to the villagers and are planted to act as windbreaks and to provide shade and slow down evaporation in vegetable gardens. Leucaena is a legume, and its root nodules contain bacteria that extract nitrogen from the atmosphere and improve soil fertility by producing nitrates. Community members are encouraged to plant 52 seedlings because in a 3-to-5-year period, 52 trees would supply enough fuel for a year. It also relieves women of having to carry heavy loads for great distances. ■

ON THE SCENT OF THE MUSK DEER

The musk deer (*Moschus moschiferus*), a small hornless ruminant that lives in mountainous regions of Central Asia, China, eastern Korea and Siberia, is out of luck. The musk gland of the male is coveted both by Asian medicine and the Western perfume industry. Consisting of sexual hormones, cholesterol and a waxy substance, musk gives out a strong odour. Although musk can be collected from farm-reared specimens without killing the animal, as is done in China, poachers do not hesitate to defy measures to protect the musk deer. According to World Wide Fund for

and agricultural colonization," says Alain Karsenty, "makes it difficult to apportion the responsibility borne by each activity in deforestation processes."

Edward Goldsmith has no time for those who condemn farmers for clearing land by fire, for this process has always been used, even in Europe. Its disadvantages become apparent when the population grows and the land is not left fallow for long enough, thus preventing the forest from regenerating itself between two burnings.

Crops are greedy devourers of forest. In Ethiopia vast plantations have replaced trees: 60 per cent of the land is now given over to cotton-growing and 22 per cent to sugar cane. Central America has seen two-thirds of its forests sacrificed to livestock-raising. Numerous developing countries that once exported timber—Nigeria, for example, but above all the Philippines, once a major exporter—now import it. Of the last thirty exporters in the Third World today, only ten will still be exporting by the end of the century.

Another factor in deforestation is the timber industry. Until now Suriname on South America's north-eastern coast has been 90 per cent covered by virgin rainforest. But the government has just granted a concession of 150,000 hectares to an Indonesian logging company and is considering throwing in two million hectares more. Ernie Brunings, a member of Suriname's National Assembly, was quoted by *Time* magazine as saying bluntly, "We cannot have these riches and keep them for their beauty if we have children dying of hunger, as we have here." This is the crux of the matter. The logging industry creates jobs, and however low the wages may be, they provide a basic minimum.

LAND-HUNGRY FARMERS

Sustainable management of rainforests on a planetary scale is essential. This is what the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the World Bank and the World Resources Institute (WRI) are trying to achieve via an ongoing process known as the Tropical Forestry Action Plan (TFAP). This is not a new plan but it is still relevant, although there has been some criticism that state authorities and

Egrets in the mangroves of Florida (U.S.A.).

sources of finance have a bigger say in it than the populations directly concerned.

"Is it possible," Alain Karsenty wonders, "both to preserve vast multifunctional forest ecosystems (protectors of biodiversity, homes to local communities, bulwarks against erosion and regulators of climate) and to allow logging activities on an industrial scale?" He goes on to ask, "How can we reconcile a business rationale that thinks largely in the short term with natural forest regeneration, a process that extends over dozens of years?"

Forest space is in high demand. Not only by logging companies but—once the loggers have pulled out—by large-scale livestock-raisers and cacao and rubber planters, who are always ready to clear the land. Forms of exploitation vary from region to region. In Africa, where highly-prized wood like mahogany is found and logging is very selective, only one tree per hectare is felled on average. This may not be much, but to reach logging sites, trails have to be cut, sometimes as much as one hundred kilometres long, and this opens the way to land-hungry farmers. In tropical America, the opposite happens. The farmers go in first and are followed by loggers. Deforestation problems in southeast Asia result from intensive, often devastating, clear-cutting. The pockets of remaining forest are vulnerable to fires, as has been seen in Borneo.

SUSTAINABLE POSSIBILITIES

Several proposals for preserving the rainforest have been put forward. One is to limit the time period of concessions granted to logging companies and making their renewal dependent on "good behaviour". Logging companies might aso be obliged by states to build on-site saw

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Slash-and-burn farming, or *milpa*, in Mexico. In this very ancient system, the vegetation that grows during long fallow periods is destroyed by burning.

mills, as is done in Cameroon, to prevent them from clearing out once they have cut down all the valuable trees. The value of concessions could also be reasssed by taking account of their true commercial value and granting them on a competitive basis. Skid trails must also be laid down, for, according to the World Bank, from 15 to 35 per cent of the damage to forests is caused by tractors foraging randomly in search of felled trees. Felling techniques could also be improved so that falling trees cause less damage to their neighbours. If their operating costs could be brought down and their safety ensured for both men and forest, helicopters and blimps could eventually lift timber vertically out of the forest.

The preservation of the rainforest depends above all on the political determination of states. Either states tolerate tree-felling and impose taxes on it, or they define regulations for using and managing the forests that international organizations like the FAO and the World Bank are prepared to support.

Some states, such as Indonesia, prohibit the exporting of unprocessed wood. In the process of industrializing, they have sought to add value to their timber and create jobs. Is this a solution? In Indonesia there are 500,000 jobs in plywood mills and about three million jobs in the wood industry overall. To function, the industry requires 50 million m^3 of unprocessed wood per year, but the country can no longer supply this amount. Wood must be obtained at any price—thus encouraging illicit practices—or the mills will have to be closed down, which is politically impossible.

German, Dutch and American ecologists have proposed that the developed countries should boycott tropical wood unless it carries the "green label" awarded to wood from forests that are exploited sustainably. Even this plan is not without drawbacks. What is to prevent timber companies from reaping maximum profits before the restriction becomes universal? It might also speed up the conversion of forests into huge cacao and coffee farms that are supposedly more profitable. Or states may simply cease to manage and develop their forests, in the belief they will not be able to make money out of them.

Preservation and exploitation are not incompatible. In the tropics as in Europe, a forest that is not taken care of is a dying forest. But in managing these renewable natural resources, we must be satisfied with reaping the interest without touching the capital. ■

FURTHER READING:

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- ***The Last Rain Forests***, Mark Collins, IUCN and Mitchell Beasley, 1990.
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- ***The Disappearing Tropical Forests***, MAB and the International Hydrological Programme, UNESCO, 1991.
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The luxuriant Zimbabwe forest near the Victoria Falls.

WORLD

Nature (WWF) estimates, there are no more than 100,000 musk deer left in the world. ■

SHRIMP IN CAGES

Since 1992, France's Research Institute for Exploitation of the Sea (IFREMER) has been co-operating with Brazil on a pilot project for farming shrimp in cages. The project is designed to increase production and to study the impact of aquaculture on the environment. In Ecuador, IFREMER is co-operating with the National Centre for Aquaculture and Marine Research (CENAIM) on the immunology and pathology of shrimp grown on farms. But while the cage technique is simple, the high-tech facilities being used in Ecuador have been strongly criticized by the British ecologist Edward Goldsmith on the grounds that their products are too expensive for the needy. ■

FIRE-LOVING FLOWERS

A rare flowering plant, the Peter's Mountain mallow (*Iliamna corei*), has made a remarkable comeback thanks to a prescribed burning programme in a Nature Conservancy Preserve in Virginia (U.S.A.). Only four such plants were known to exist when scientists discovered a large amount of dormant but viable seeds surrounding the plants. The fire-dependent plant was brought back from the brink of extinction when over 500 seeds sprouted after a controlled burn was conducted in the preserve. ■

THE GREEN BUSES OF BRUSSELS

Last March, Belgium's Ministry of Public Works and Communications and World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Belgium launched 20 new buses in Brussels that run on compressed natural gas (CNG). Although they cost almost $30,000 more than diesel buses to buy, maintenance costs are halved and a ministry subsidy keeps CNG prices even with those of diesel fuel. New York, Toronto and several other European cities including Utrecht (Netherlands) and Ravenna (Italy) already power public transport vehicles with natural gas. WWF-Belgium has sent education packs explaining the link between transportation and urban pollution to all secondary schools in Brussels. While the world waits for a miracle-fuel, CNG remains the least polluting of all. ■

RABELAIS
the ribald scholar

by Alain Frontier

François Rabelais (c.1494-1553). Drawing by an unknown 16th-century artist.

This year marks the 500th anniversary of the birth of the French writer François Rabelais, hailed by his compatriot Chateaubriand as "one of the nurturing geniuses of humanity". The earthy, exuberant universe that he created has lost none of its liberating power.

Not even the French can get over the idea that their literature should have spawned so vast and overwhelming a writer as Rabelais. They still regard him with a sort of bemused incredulity.

The little that is known about his life is strange enough as it is. We know that he was born near Chinon in western France in the closing years of the fifteenth century and that he died in Paris around 1553. We also know that he was a monk. He must have been an odd kind of monk, attracted more by study than by monastic life, spending his days devouring books, including some which the arbiters of the intellectual and moral order of the time regarded as suspect. His reading was not only in Latin, the language of the clergy and the Church, but also in Greek, a language dear to adepts of the new thinking, and Hebrew, which made it possible to read the Bible without having to go through Latin translations and official commentaries. This rather unorthodox monk seems to have been protected by people in high places, where enthusiasm for new ideas can sometimes be found. After his Greek books had been confiscated on the orders of the Sorbonne, he found a haven in a Benedictine monastery, whose library was more congenial and whose abbot was more accommodating. Eventually he was authorized to shed his monk's habit and was released from his vows.

All through his life, he corresponded and debated with the leading intellectual lights of the age, men such as Guillaume Budé, Erasmus and Thomas More. Very much a man of his time, he was deeply involved in the current of renewal which ushered in more critical attitudes and a greater sense of freedom, truth and beauty. He travelled. He studied medicine at Montpellier, became a famous doctor and was for several years head of the hospital in Lyons. It was then that Rabelais, the man of science and culture, became known not for learned treatises and scholastic works but for his *folâtries*, the collections of fantastic and very funny tales published under the titles of *Horribles et épouvantables faits et prouesses du très renommé Pantagruel* (1532) or the *Vie inestimable du grand Gargantua, père de Pantagruel* (1534). In these stories erudition rubs shoulders with barefaced humour, and folly and wisdom are to be found in equal measure. Rabelais' characters are giants not only in size but in wit. Their appetite for fleshmeat and knowledge is boundless, and so is their thirst for strong drink! Wise men or lunatics, scholars or jokers, they spend all their time drinking and have the uncanny power to provoke the same alcoholic thirst in everybody they meet.

Even at their most serious, the tales are liable to cause a great eruption of belly laughter. Everything is good for a laugh—Rabelais was never one to dally over the daintier aspects of language or to

Gargantua à Paris, an illustration by the French artist Albert Robida (1842-1926).

"Better to write of laughter than tears,
For laughter is proper to man"
RABELAIS

"Gargantua at his great board", detail from an early-19th-century engraving based on a play inspired by Rabelais' work and performed in the Tuileries Gardens in Paris.

mince his words. He uses a staggeringly rich vocabulary, ranging from the recondite to the demotic, from the most picturesque of evocations to the crudest slang. Too bad if chaste ears are offended by crude jokes or obscene language. Rabelais' laughter propels his sentences along at a breathtaking pace, as the sounds collide with one another and set off reverberations, to the extent that they sometimes cloak the actual words he uses. The sentences go on and on, before disappearing in a torrent of enumerations that sweeps away both the words and the music they make.

Rabelais is a laughing cavalier of philosophy. This is the problem. What relationship can there be between this booming laughter and this universal intelligence? Rabelais was blessed with the marvellous gift of being able to give expression to values such as love of freedom, tolerance, thirst for knowledge, and faith in progress that are so precious and essential to us. But through this laughter, he also seems to be taking away with one hand what he gives with the other. There may therefore be a great temptation to cut the man in two, to look at the man of laughter on one side and the man of ideas on the other; on the one hand the verve of the writer, on the other the ideas of the philosopher.

Even in the eyes of his contemporaries, Rabelais was more than just a public jester. This can be clearly seen from the attacks directed at him by the Sorbonne. A clown would not have been so unrelentingly pursued. Rabelais made people feel ill at ease. They could not be indifferent to the criticism he levelled against the Church and the courts, against ideas about education, against the institutions of official thinking. People could not countenance his lack of respect for those whose function is to be taken seriously.

In reality, the funny, crazy side of his books is not merely an agreeable wrapping for the austere content of the message. What Rabelais had to teach us is that laughter is necessary in the quest for truth. There is nothing more serious than laughter—at least Rabelais' sort of laughter. It is a weapon to be used against people who take themselves too seriously. It makes fissures in the walls of obscurantism. It prevents thought from becoming set in certainties. It is what makes thought possible. Rabelais always kept his eyes wide open and his ears to the ground. He listened to all kinds of voices, languages, cultures and worlds. He said, "I want to make sure that there is no sea or river or fountain whose fish you do not know. . ., all the birds of the air, all the trees of the forest, all the blades of grass, all the metals hidden deep in the bowels of the earth . . . that there is nothing that you do not know".

There can be no thought without this freedom, this feeling for movement, and open-mindedness. The laughter of Rabelais makes them possible. ■

ALAIN FRONTIER,
a French poet and grammarian, is the author of several introductory works to classical Greek and a dozen volumes of poetry and fiction. Among his most recent published works is *La Poésie* (Belin publishers, Paris, 1992).

Marie Curie
The spirit of adventure

Marie Curie, the French physicist of Polish origin who shared the Nobel Prize for Physics in 1903 and won the Prize for Chemistry in 1911, was one of the most popular members of the scientific community of her day. Always a proponent of international intellectual co-operation, she was one of the 12 members of the first committee set up for this purpose by the League of Nations, and until her death played an active role in the work of the International Institute of Intellectual Co-operation (IIIC). When she chaired the IIIC symposium on the Future of Culture, held in Madrid from 3-7 May 1933, she spoke on all the topics that were discussed—the definition of culture, the crisis of culture and the future of culture. Salient extracts from her address are given below.

Text selected and presented by Edgardo Canton

BEFORE throwing the discussion open, I think it may be useful if I summarize the contributions of previous speakers and add a few thoughts of my own.

We agree that there is a national element at the root of every culture; and we also agree on the fundamental point that a universal culture needs to be superimposed on every national culture, and that the development of the individual is a duty in every national and international culture.

What matters—and here again we are all in agreement—is not so much knowing how to strike a balance between national and universal culture as clearly recognizing the need to eliminate whatever makes for hostility and antagonism and to prefer co-operation and reconciliation.

By way of example perhaps I may quote the case of laboratories, since that is what I know most about. A big scientific laboratory is an example of universal culture sustained by input from national cultures: mutual respect for work done ensures a favourable environment for co-operation. It is a source of great satisfaction to find that the sharing of a common task is conducive in the workers to a state of mind favourable to universal culture.

Like some members of the Committee, I am not convinced that a state of crisis is particularly abnormal. It may be a normal state, in the sense that evolution takes place not at an even pace but through an alternation of what we may call crises and what we may call bursts of speed. This is an example of the discontinuity found everywhere in the field of science, and I believe it is the natural way things work. If at the moment we have an unusually serious crisis, it is because of the dreadful circumstances that have recently shaken Europe, and also no doubt because of the rapid pace of industrial and technological development on which some of us have insisted.

Features of the crisis include the specialization and standardization that rightly perturb the intellectual world. Some of you hold that it is possible to react against specialization, and that the sciences can be better presented and better taught.

I am one of those who believe that science is a thing of great beauty. A scientist in his laboratory is not merely a technician: he is also a child faced with natural phenomena that impress him in the same way as a fairy story. We must have a way of communicating this feeling to outsiders; we must not let it be supposed that all scientific advance boils down to a matter of machinery and apparatus—not that machinery and apparatus do not also have a beauty of their own. Like Professor Haldane, I believe that we can remedy this state of affairs.

CURIOSITY AND THE SPIRIT OF ADVENTURE

I also do not think that the spirit of adventure is likely to die out in the world. The one vital thing I see as I look around me is the spirit of adventure: it seems ineradicable, and is related to curiosity. I am inclined to think that it is a primitive human instinct, for I cannot see how humanity could have survived without it,

Marie Curie (1867-1934) in her laboratory.

any more than a person could survive with absolutely no memory. Curiosity and the spirit of adventure have certainly not died out. What about the people who go up in aircraft and cross the Atlantic? There are plenty of other examples: if I do not quote them it is for lack of time. The spirit of adventure is found in children of all ages and at all levels.

That leaves the problem of tiredness and overdoing it. That is a real source of danger. People who do intellectual work do not have time to think about the problems that crop up. They are obliged to adopt at high speed ideas that can only be assimilated gradually. Technical advances force on us ways of living and working that are perhaps beyond the capacity of the human organism.

Thinking is a form of activity that requires time. It is not certain that when we considerably accelerate the speed of such a phenomenon the human organism can adapt to the change. If experience showed that some of what modern civilization demands of us is actually dangerous, and cannot be made harmless by reasonable adjustment, then perhaps we ought to give up some of the efforts that we ask of our organs and are helping to destroy them. That is a suggestion for the biologists: it is not for me to judge.

As regards lack of drive and initiative, I am not pessimistic. Drive and enterprise are, I believe, the attributes of every person in good physical and mental health, so I do not think they will die out—provided that the species can resist physical decadence. The spirit of enterprise doubtless needs to be channelled and given worthwhile tasks to perform, otherwise it will operate in areas where it may have ill-effects.

It is hard to forecast the future. As many of us here have said, we can make wishes, put forward solutions, and seek to make dreams come true; but we cannot say what the results will be. We cannot, among other things, prevent natural disasters, which can destroy what we have achieved.

But just because we have this spirit of enterprise, which we cannot do without, we behave as though the future belonged to us. This is part of the instinct of self-preservation, and also of our feeling of racial solidarity, which does for us what our inner life does, namely gives us responsibilities towards future generations.

A UNIVERSAL GOAL

How are we to express our ambitions, the goal of our dreams? This is a big problem, which I shall not tackle for the moment. Mr. Jules Romains has told us that we must go to the limits of the capabilities of the human species. We cannot imagine what these limits may be, because we have no idea what the spirit of invention and initiative, which shows itself so strongly, has in store for us. But if we agree to go to the limits, that is all we can do. So I am happy to accept this expression.

One thing we can do is to state here and now the conditions in which dreams can become possible and not be inexorably destroyed by events. We can recognize that our dream of the future requires the synthesis of national cultures, and the subordination of largely political differences to a universal aim, that of culture and communication. ■

Seeking the inner voice

Catherine Françaix talks to Isabelle Leymarie

A trained pianist and actress, Catherine Français has worked with children for many years and has studied Tai-Chi and other oriental disciplines. She teaches musicians and actors to look further than the written word or musical score in order to discover their own rhythms and, through these, freedom of expression and their own inner selves. The voice is the key element in this type of training.

You are specifically interested in the fundamental role played by music and the human voice in all religions.

—In very old sacred traditions, man is regarded as the temple of the divine. At the same time, mantras, prayers, sacred sounds, poems and chants have a physical function: they facilitate the movement of the diaphragm, and through their resonance and rhythm awaken the harmonics of the body. The body, especially the voice, is designed as a musical instrument. We could, for instance, make an analogy with the violin. The violin has different shapes, with curves that are rounded, or more or less angular. If the "sound post", the piece of wood that connects the back of the violin to its front and maintains the correct distance between them, is moved, the shape of the curves is modified and the sound of the instrument changes, since the vibratory phenomenon is a balance between form, contained in the material, and the intangible which circulates inside the instrument.

The same is true of the human body: the diaphragm which stretches and amplifies the breathing through its constant spring-like motion, corresponds in a way to the sound post of the violin. It's the diaphragm that helps the body maintain its proportions.

Since the inner world and the outer world are inseparable, physical and mental changes can bring about changes in the voice. Conversely, a more judicious use of the voice should help to restore harmony between the self and the outer world when it has been disturbed.

—Yes, in the Ancient World doctors used the voice and sound in general to restore corporal harmony, and incantatory magic would balance natural forces through the power of sound. Working on the voice can sometimes remove certain physiological or psychological blocks. It restores tone to the organs, and, since the voice is our essential tool of communication with plants, animals, man and the gods, it encourages receptivity to the outside world.

What steps can one take to improve one's voice?

—First of all it is useful to bear in mind that the voice is both subtle and adaptable. It is constantly changing, at every stage in life and even over longer periods of time. For instance, listening to voice recordings of the 1920s and 1930s, one is struck by the difference in colour between those voices and those of today.

Training the voice means improving one's breathing, sometimes by working on the form through physical exercise, and sometimes by working on the content, or internal energy (the Chinese *chi*, the Japanese *ki*, and the Indian *prana*) and the channels by which it circulates. One basic exercise consists in warming up the diaphragm so as to be able to hear the fullness, the elasticity of sound. Another consists in awakening the face muscles. When we grow up, we stop using some of our face muscles and lose some of our expressiveness as a result. The remarkable actors of *commedia dell'arte* who create "masks" by using different face muscles also manage to produce the right colour of voice to match the emotional resonance of the mask. The basic mask is the "neutral" one, where the face is relaxed and welcomes, receives, imbues itself with sensations. In vibratory terms, this corresponds to the position of non-oscillation between two emissions of sound.

It is also necessary to discover the body's points of equilibrium (without which the body establishes compensatory mechanisms), its centre of gravity. This awareness of the centre of gravity, on which certain Oriental disciplines lay great emphasis, provides a pleasurable feeling of stretching. Voice production is linked to both the balance and the suppleness of the body. The word "tone" comes from the Greek "tonos", which means "tone", "tonus", "tonic", "ligament", "musical mode" and "tone of voice". It is also necessary to master the motor impulses which produce sound. This implies harmony between gesture and thought. In days gone by, everything to do with the intellect was explained with the aid of metaphors and all that had to do with the imagination or the divine with the aid of mathematics and geometry.

After this necessary physical preparation, should one work on elocution?

—Yes, by seeking the right rhythm. In all languages, the consonant represents the medium while the vowel signifies the breath. It is the vowel that signifies the transition from one phoneme to another, prolonging the impulse of the consonant. To carry out this transition smoothly, without loss of balance, one has to find a point of support. The sacred languages, notably Hebrew, were conscious of this notion of balance of speech. If the scansion is misplaced, if we do not accentuate enough, we cannot get our breath back. This involuntary apnoea brings with it a break in rhythm and distorts the relationship with the person to whom we are talking. Here again, it is the elasticity of the diaphragm that allows you to control the flow of breath.

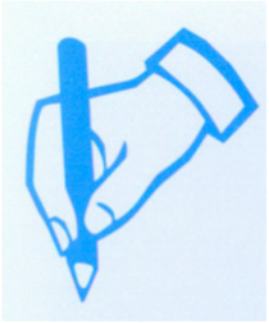
Is the lack of genuine communication between human beings, which seems to be exacerbated by the modern world, linked to the loss of this rhythm and balance of speech?

—In art, certainly. It has been noted that in many languages, except in regional speech which has remained highly colourful, there is a loss of expressiveness, due both to lack of time and to a fear of human relationships. We adults no longer live in the words we utter, the body no longer takes part, while children on the other hand, in a spontaneous way, physically live out what they say. If we do not take the time either to speak correctly or to listen to others, the breath no longer circulates. We suffocate and we smother those with whom we speak. This communication problem also brings about a flattening of the melodic curve of the language and an impoverishment of the vocabulary.

In order to use one's voice correctly is it necessary to know how to listen?

—Absolutely. And listening can be purposeful or receptive. In the second case, one allows oneself to be bathed by the resonance, the emotional climate evoked by the sound, thereby gaining access to one's inner world. "Sentire" in Italian means both to listen and to hear. Polyphonic singing, in which one hears one's own voice and the voice of others without losing one's self, is a marvellous way of developing the ability to listen and of learning to establish dialogue. Bringing together East and West, it does away with the need for long journeys in quest of exotic teachings, because it helps us find what we are seeking within ourselves. ■

ISABELLE LEYMARIE, a Franco-American musicologist, is the author of *La Salsa et le Latin Jazz* (PUF, Paris, 1993). She is currently working on a study of black music in Latin America and the Caribbean.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

✎ LATENT MACHISMO

Congratulations on the high quality of your magazine and your choice of themes that are always interesting and well documented. Sometimes, however, I am annoyed by a latent macho attitude that flies in the face of UNESCO's humanistic message.

My annoyance bubbled over into anger when in your March 1994 issue on human rights, Manfred Nowak in an article entitled "States of bondage" (page 28) acknowledged that certain serious forms of corporal punishment approved by Islamic law constitute "cruel and inhuman punishment or even torture" but then went on to say that, "whether states under present international law are under a positive obligation to prohibit female circumcision is more difficult to judge". He admitted that "these traditional practices inflict severe physical and mental pain on the girls and women concerned", but limited himself to exhorting the offending governments to "at least try to prevent them by educational and similar means". And to feminists around the world who denounce circumcision of young girls "as a form of torture prohibited under international law", the author merely says that "many Africans view the practice as an expression of their traditional culture".

This so-called cultural practice has never counted among its free and willing supporters the majority—52 per cent—of the people concerned, i.e. women. This act of aggression, which deprives women of their inalienable right to sexual pleasure, is a violation of their lives and the lives of their children, and condemns them to pain and humiliation, is no better, morally speaking, than castrating young singers, deforming the feet of young Chinese women, the elimination of female foetuses in China and India, the practice of suttee in India, the immolation of virgins among the Mayas, slavery, genocide, raping women in cities and in times of war and many other violent acts committed in the name of God and good conscience. The most immediately dissuasive measure would be for the international community to show that it is no longer willing to tolerate the torture of women and other vulnerable elements of society in this way.

Maya Khankhoje
Montreal (Canada)

✎ MONEY AND SPORT

I am interested in the traditional sports and games of the Mediterranean region and have been doing some research on sport-related subjects. I came across your highly interesting and useful publication and was captivated by your issues of May, 1991 ("People at Play") and December, 1992 ("The Competitive World of Sport").

What disturbs me most is the current trend to ignore traditional sports and games in favour of popular spectator sports, namely, soccer, tennis and cycling. It is no secret, in fact, that these three disciplines are those most extensively covered by the media in Europe. The ethical values associated with sport are being lost and replaced by the desire for success at any cost. Economic factors have invaded sport and the educational function that sport can play is being, to say the least, obscured.

Developing countries are increasingly being lured into encouraging their youth to practice the popular "western" sports, hoping that this will ultimately put them on the world map. This is a serious danger and must not be ignored. If it is, there is a risk that mankind will not only leave behind an impoverished cultural heritage to posterity but will also be tempted to see sport as just a money-making activity.

Stephen Caruana
Tarxien (Malta)

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Correction: the credit for Frantz Zéphirin's painting *Makandal burned alive* reproduced on page 24 of the October 1994 issue should have read: © **Carte SEGRETE, Rome.** The painting belongs to the "Afrique en Créations" collection.

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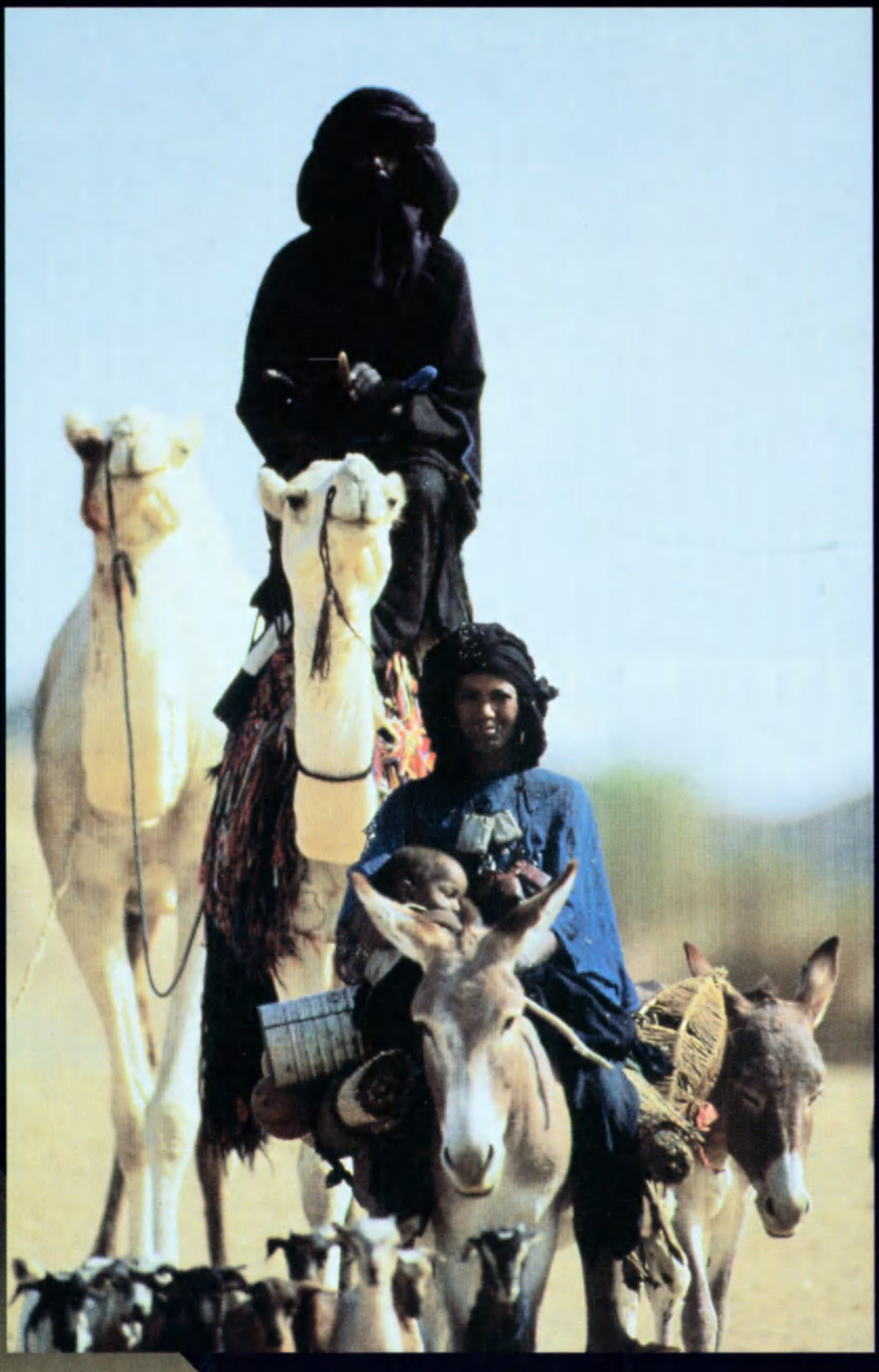

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POLITICS AND RELIGION

ALSO FEATURING AN INTERVIEW
WITH THE GERMAN HISTORIAN

WOLF LEPENNIES